



## **NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

Office of Aviation Safety  
Washington, D.C. 20594

**Attachment 17 – Interview Summaries, Transcripts and Records of Conversation**

### **OPERATIONAL FACTORS / HUMAN PERFORMANCE**

**CEN19MA141AB**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MIDAIR \*

COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN \* Accident No.: CEN19MA141

KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: LOUIS BECK  
Pilot

May 2019

## APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Operations Group Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board

AARON SAUER, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

BILL BRAMBLE, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

TODD GENTRY, Accident Investigator  
Federal Aviation Administration Headquarters

MICHELLE WATTERS, M.D., Ph.D., Medical Officer  
National Transportation Safety Board

KEVIN ROOF  
Taquan Air

DAN QUINN, Attorney  
(On behalf of Lou Beck)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. BANNING: So my name is Brice Banning, and I'm the Operations Group Chairman for the accident involving, or accident number CEN19MA141.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not a part of the Department of Transportation or the FAA, and it has no regulatory or enforcement powers.

I would like to go ahead and introduce -- have each of the group members introduce themselves. And so, as previous stated, Brice Banning, Operations Group Chairman.

DR. BRAMBLE: My name is Bill Bramble. I'm a human performance investigator with NTSB out of Washington.

MR. GENTRY: My name is Todd Gentry. I'm FAA Headquarters Accident Investigation and Prevention. That's all I do.

DR. WATTERS: My name is Dr. Michelle Watters. I'm a medical officer with NTSB, based in Washington.

MR. ROOF: Kevin Roof, party rep for Taquan Air.

MR. SAUER: Aaron Sauer with the NTSB. I'm the investigator in charge for this accident, and I'm based in the Denver, Colorado, Central Region Office.

MR. QUINN: And I'm Dan Quinn, attorney for Lou Beck.

MR. BECK: Lou Beck, accident pilot.

MR. BANNING: Thank you. And I wanted to ask you, before we

1 get the interview started, is there anybody that you object to  
2 being present for this interview that's in the room and has  
3 introduced themselves?

4 MR. BECK: No.

5 MR. BANNING: Okay, thank you.

6 Today we'll be using the services of a digital recorder. We  
7 will take that recording, send it out for transcription, and the  
8 party members will have an opportunity to review that  
9 transcription to correct it for any errors.

10 Once again, the purpose of the investigation is to determine  
11 probable cause and prevent reoccurrence, and our role is not to  
12 assign fault. We're here simply to -- for you to share your  
13 insight, with the goal of preventing accidents.

14 Each of the group members will have a -- oh, and having said  
15 that, however, we cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or  
16 anything, or immunity.

17 Each of the group members will have a chance to ask  
18 questions. We'll ask questions one at a time, and everyone has  
19 been instructed to not interrupt the person who is asking  
20 questions at the time. There will be the opportunity for each  
21 group member to ask follow-up questions after each person has had  
22 a turn.

23 Please answer all questions to the best of your recollection.  
24 If you don't understand a question, just say so. And if you  
25 realize you misstated or want to correct something, please do so.

1           You are entitled to have one representative of your choosing.  
2   Is there someone you would like to have as your representative?

3           MR. BECK: Yes. Dan Quinn, attorney.

4           MR. BANNING: Thank you.

5           And Dan, as previously discussed, you can direct Lou to not  
6   answer a question. You can request a short break to confer with  
7   Lou. But, if you would, please refrain from answering any  
8   questions on Lou's behalf.

9           And does anybody have any questions?

10          MR. BECK: I do not.

11          MR. BANNING: Okay. All right.

12                                   INTERVIEW OF LOU BECK

13          BY MR. BANNING:

14   Q.   And I know you already stated your name, Lou, but would you  
15   state it again with your title and -- your job title?

16   A.   No job title, just a pilot, employed by Taquan. Full name  
17   Louis Martin Beck.

18   Q.   Okay. Thank you. And can you give us a little information  
19   about yourself, Lou, your age, where you reside, date you were  
20   hired by Taquan?

21   A.   My age is 60. Where I reside is in Utah; Eden, Utah. And I  
22   was hired in the spring of -- this is '19, the spring of 2018 by  
23   this company. Flew a season here last year, and again employed  
24   spring of this year.

25   Q.   Okay. And can you give us a little background about your

1 flight experience, your aviation background, how you got started  
2 in aviation?

3 A. I was born in a flying family. I really can't remember not  
4 flying. My own formal training started in '79. I've been  
5 professionally flying since then, without stop. I went to Embry  
6 Riddle, so I went through the courses there, their full courses.  
7 Went into the Air Force, spent 5 years flying T-38s as an IP. I  
8 flew 130s for 3 years up here. Got hired by Delta Airlines, flew  
9 out of Salt Lake, flew for them for 28 years. Flew all of their  
10 Boeings, with the exception of the 747. I flew everything. Each  
11 airplane flies a different mission, so domestic as well as  
12 international, lots of (indiscernible), extensive mountain  
13 experience in jets and non-jets.

14 I have never quit flying small airplanes. I've kept a CFI,  
15 and I'm active in that. I've been fortunate to fly a lot of  
16 different types of airplanes as well as different groups of  
17 flying. I spent 20 years flying corporate with my dad, while I  
18 was flying with the airline. So I can speak the languages of  
19 civil aviation and military, the airline and the corporate, and  
20 this kind of stuff up here.

21 My float experience, I got a float rating in the early '80s,  
22 and didn't do a lot of float flying until we moved back to Alaska  
23 in 2006, and did a lot of float flying around the Anchorage area  
24 during that time. And then we decided, for family reasons, to  
25 move back to Utah, full-time. I sold the airplane at that time,

1 that would have been 2014, and then continued to fly floatplanes  
2 on and off, friends' airplanes, and then of course, full-time last  
3 years with these guys.

4 I retired from Delta Airlines 2 years ago, early, because  
5 there was no need for me to stay there any longer when I had other  
6 things I wanted to pursue, family-related. I really didn't  
7 anticipate taking another flying job when I retired, but this  
8 popped up, and there really aren't that many people that have the  
9 qualifications that allow them to do this, and I didn't want this  
10 opportunity to get away. I had spent enough time in Alaska. This  
11 was an opportunity I took, and that's why I'm still here.

12 My professional qualifications are, I've been an instructor  
13 and evaluator in pretty much everything I've flown, whether it  
14 was, you know, the GA stuff. I was a check airman at the airline,  
15 and that kind of stuff, so --

16 Flying time is probably somewhere -- I stopped tracking some  
17 time ago, but probably north of 25 and south of 30. And that's  
18 about it.

19 Q. And 25 and 30 being 25,000 hours and --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. About how much float time do you have, do you know?

22 A. I would guess somewhere, at least a thousand, but I don't  
23 know.

24 Q. Okay. And do you know -- do you have a rough idea how much  
25 time you have in the Otter on floats?

1 A. I can tell you almost to the hour, but I haven't tallied it.  
2 I've got notes at home. But it would be ballpark at this time, I  
3 would say the Otter time for me is probably somewhere around 20 to  
4 25 hours.

5 Q. Okay. And have you flown the Beaver on floats?

6 A. Yeah. I've got 550 hours in the Beaver.

7 Q. Okay. So I'd like to talk a little bit about the accident  
8 flight. Can you, in your own words, just describe the flight from  
9 the beginning, so from the time that you left the dock here at  
10 Taquan, and just relate the flight to us in your own words?

11 A. How far do you want me to take it? To the ambulance or to --  
12 do you want -- I mean -- or just till we were out of an airplane?

13 Q. No. If you're comfortable --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. As long as you're comfortable --

16 A. Yeah, yeah.

17 Q. -- I'd like to take it through the rescue and to the  
18 ambulance, yeah.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. As long as you're comfortable. And if you --

21 A. Yeah, that's fine.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. All right. The Otter flight was planned as a, what we call a  
24 boat fly, where I take people out to a dock in the middle of  
25 Rudyard Fjord, drop them off, and pick up a named list of people

1 and fly them a remainder of a tour, and deliver them back to  
2 Taquan at the end.

3 I picked these people -- I delivered the first people to the  
4 dock. I picked up this group of people, and carried them back  
5 toward Ketchikan. I think it's important to your investigation, I  
6 try to establish a rapport with people before they get on. Excuse  
7 me.

8 Q. No. Take your time.

9 A. I think I did that. And then, get everybody in the airplane.  
10 Make sure that they are well briefed. My mentality is such that I  
11 think it's important to be prepared for eventualities. Some  
12 people fly airplanes casually, and while I enjoy that, my  
13 mentality is of always being ready for what might happen.

14 Anyway, got everybody settled in the airplane. In the  
15 configuration of this Otter, there are two back seats next to the  
16 aft doors. Those people, I made sure they knew how to open the  
17 doors. I demonstrated them. I said, you guys are the exit  
18 dudes -- and, you know, in fun, but looking at them in the eyes so  
19 they realized that was really true. Checked their seatbelts as I  
20 moved forward, make sure anybody who is having trouble, make sure  
21 they're on, and make sure that they're not loose.

22 Went to the front of the airplane. A lady that wanted to --  
23 I said, we're going to fill the co-pilot seat, and you -- I'll let  
24 you guys decide. I said, it's going to be -- I'm going to pull  
25 the stick back pretty far on the takeoff, so that isolated it from

1 a couple of large people to somebody who was of smaller size, and  
2 she sat in the front seat. I fastened her seat belt. I made sure  
3 it was tight.

4 Then I sit in my seat while they're looking at me, and I  
5 brief them. And I'm pointing as I'm doing it. And I -- I mean, I  
6 say some of this in gest, so that it's light, but I want them to  
7 understand that everything I'm saying is important, so it's pretty  
8 direct.

9 So I told them where the survival kit is, and the first aid  
10 kit. Then I told them where the fire extinguisher was. They turn  
11 and look, because I'm pointing at stuff as they're doing it. And  
12 then I tell them where mine is, up here, and then I point at the  
13 yellow life vests above their seats, and I tell them that they're  
14 the same as a life preserver that you have in an airplane, only  
15 here you might get to use it.

16 And I said, we're not going to use it today, but I want you  
17 to understand how to use it. I said, my concern is that if  
18 somebody puts one of these on, they strap themselves to the seat  
19 under stress. I said, so please don't do that, and if we have to  
20 use them, please check each other to make sure their seatbelt --  
21 that lap belt does not strap to a seat.

22 And then of course, I tell them, if we have to inflate it,  
23 yank it, but please do so outside the airplane or it makes it  
24 difficult to get out.

25 Then I talk about the doors, that the one they came in has



1 one just straight across that looks just like it, opens the same  
2 way. And that we have two in front, but that they're smaller.  
3 The ones in the back should be the priority. And then I make sure  
4 that the person who's sitting next to me understands we have a  
5 door, that's how that handle works, but that the back door is our  
6 priority.

7 Then I look at all their seatbelts, and ask, everybody got  
8 your seat belt on? And they all give me a thumbs up. At that  
9 point, we're ready to go. And then we depart the Rudyard Fjord  
10 and we head back here.

11 The airplane that I'm flying today is a little faster than  
12 the Beavers that are normally out there. I normally fly outside  
13 what would be the normal routing of the Beavers to deconflict. If  
14 I'm outside of those, there are less people that I have to watch  
15 for. So I'm flying the same routing, but just farther. We're all  
16 going to arrive about the same time when we come back.

17 The significant parts of this, the -- start at about 4,000  
18 feet on the way back. And Kevin, you can give me the geographic  
19 reference, but where Aqua Lake is, above Manzanita, those high  
20 mountains there, if you know the name of those, it would probably  
21 help, but I don't know the name of those.

22 MR. ROOF: I just know Aqua, above Manzanita.

23 MR. BECK: Okay.

24 MR. ROOF: Between Swan Lake --

25 MR. BECK: Okay.

1           MR. ROOF:  -- and Manzanita Lake is Aqua Lake.

2           MR. BECK:  All right.  Anyway, there's high terrain there.  
3  It's very scenic, but I generally go around those high mountains  
4  and make a straight line for Ketchikan at that point.  That puts  
5  me at about 4,000 feet.  And once I'm on the other side of that,  
6  then I get a big picture view of what's between me and Ketchikan.

7           The Chelton screen has ADS-B displayed.  Thus far, there  
8  aren't many airplanes out where I am.  So far, I've only seen one  
9  other airplane via that route.

10          On the way back, once I am clear of that terrain, I checked  
11  the ADS-B, the screen, to see what I had.  I had it on big scale.  
12  I brought it down to a finer scale, or a larger scale, whatever's  
13  correct, so that I could see the ones closer to me.  I remember  
14  that there were two groups of blue triangles, but not on my line.  
15  They were to the left of where I was going.

16          We're going from that high terrain to the mountains behind  
17  Ketchikan, and where I'm going to cross those mountains of  
18  Ketchikan is a waterfall known as Manzoni Falls, which is near  
19  where the collision occurred.

20          On the way there, I'm going to cross two inlets, the Carroll  
21  Inlet and the George Inlet.  Carroll Inlet -- up until now, I've  
22  been talking to these people.  My left hand is responsible for VHF  
23  and Fox-Mike, Fox-Mike being the company radio.  My right hand has  
24  a mic switch for the intercom.  And then I have an iPhone in front  
25  of me that has the music that these people listen to when I'm not

1 talking to them. That's with a wire to a stereo setup, which I'm  
2 managing the stereo. When I talk to these people, it will  
3 override it, but it's probably easier for them to understand if I  
4 turn the volume down.

5 So that's a distraction, so I'm careful about when I do that.  
6 But I've got to reach over in front of this other person to  
7 manipulate any radios, so that's the VHF. The Fox-Mike doesn't  
8 require any manipulation. The stereo does. And that's pretty  
9 much it. I try to manage this stuff to reduce the risk in a  
10 densely populated area.

11 The next call I'm going to make is over the top of Carroll  
12 Inlet, and that's a position report to the company. And we  
13 overfly some mountains next, and I'm evaluating those mountains  
14 for turbulence to determine whether it's still a good idea to  
15 proceed over the mountains into Ketchikan, which on a windy day  
16 can be more turbulent than going the longer route, around what's  
17 known as Mountain Point, which is the end of the island here.

18 The turbulence was not bad there, so I continued. The next  
19 body of water we come over is the George Inlet. A guy who has 20  
20 years of flying around here and 20,000 hours of floats can look  
21 down there and instantaneously decide what direction the winds are  
22 flowing. But a guy like me takes a little bit of time. So I  
23 spent some time looking at -- reading the water, looking at  
24 points, trying to see which way the wind was blowing, just because  
25 as a single-engine floatplane guy, if an engine fails, you better

1 have a plan because there won't be time to decide which way, and  
2 it's more important to land into the wind, in a protected cove or  
3 something like that elsewhere. So there's a little bit of time  
4 spent evaluating that.

5 As we approach the Mahoney Lakes, there's a Lower Mahoney and  
6 an Upper Mahoney. Upper Mahoney drains into Lower Mahoney. Lower  
7 Mahoney is tangent to the inlet. Over that time, I'm thinking of  
8 a couple of things. I hadn't seen anybody. I hadn't seen anybody  
9 on the ADS-B. This is the third time that I have flown this exact  
10 route on this day.

11 I know that at least once, if not twice, of those three  
12 flights that I called Lower Mahoney for Upper Mahoney at 3.5 or  
13 whatever my altitude was at the time. I don't know whether I did  
14 it on this flight. I also know I didn't hear anybody else say  
15 anything, and I don't remember seeing anybody on the screen on the  
16 ADS-B. The last time I looked at the screen, that I remember,  
17 searching for traffic, was around the Carroll Inlet area.

18 When we got -- approaching these falls, again, it's a  
19 (indiscernible) put them on the right side of the -- falls on the  
20 right side of the airplane. So that means I'm putting a lot of my  
21 concentration on what they're going to see out the window. So I'm  
22 heading toward the mountains. My objective is 90 degrees to where  
23 I'm going right now, as I want to be crossing those mountains at a  
24 slow speed, because I'll have to do a large descent, and if  
25 there's any turbulence, it will be more comfortable at a slower

1 speed.

2 So I suspect at this point I had already powered back, to be  
3 slowing down. I'm guessing -- there's no way for me to know, but  
4 I'm guessing my speed would be somewhere between 105 and 120 at  
5 the time of the accident. My objective was to be about 105 when I  
6 crossed the ridgeline that was 90 degrees.

7 At about the time -- there's another thing here, too.  
8 Shortly before I got to the falls where we were going to start  
9 maneuvering to descend, I needed to get the ATIS, and I needed to  
10 bring up the next frequency, which would be CTAF or the FAA. So  
11 that's something else I'd be doing over here at that same time.  
12 And that would have been completed probably right before we got to  
13 the falls.

14 We're flying straight ahead. I know I'm going to go this way  
15 and that way, so I'm sure that my concentration at that time was  
16 what was ahead and what was to the right. And about the time -- I  
17 don't know if I'd started raising the wing to start that gentle  
18 turn -- I try to fly very gracefully, so it would have been a very  
19 slow-rate turn. So it's very possible that I had started the  
20 turn.

21 I don't know what made me look ahead or notice out of my  
22 peripheral vision, but I saw a flash. Then I remember seeing  
23 white and red. And at the same time, there was a tremendous  
24 collision.

25 The airplane lurched to the right, 180 degrees, like a snap

1 roll. I remember going through that, that the lady in the right  
2 seat fell down on my lap. And before I knew it, the airplane was  
3 heading back toward -- away from the mountains.

4 The windshield was broken out. There was a large piece about  
5 the size of a legal tablet hanging in my face. I knew I was  
6 getting ready to go through that, so I tried to pull it. It  
7 wouldn't. I pushed it. The wind caught it out, took it away.  
8 There was a tremendous wind force in my face, and what I could see  
9 out the window was a broken prop blade about halfway up the shaft.  
10 It was stopped.

11 The vision was very blurry. I was frankly surprised that I  
12 could see out the window, because in an open cockpit airplane, you  
13 find yourself hiding under a windscreen and I didn't have any of  
14 that. I also remember that my vision was blurry. I don't know if  
15 it was jet fuel. I don't know if it was just wind. I don't know  
16 if there was some smoke involved with that as well. I didn't  
17 detect anything related to fire or smoke.

18 I did try to look at the Chelton, because we were going down.  
19 I don't know what my pitch attitude was. I'm going to guess it  
20 was 30 to 45 degrees nose low. I don't think we were wings level  
21 at that point. I remember when it -- as soon as I aware of what  
22 was going on, that I realized I had full right rudder in the  
23 airplane, trying to keep it tracking straight. And I remember  
24 having to use both hands. I'm a one-handed flyer all the time.  
25 The other hand is always on the throttle quadrant or doing

1 something up here. I remember having to use both hands to get the  
2 wings level.

3 And when I looked at the airspeed, it was too blurry.  
4 Whether it was my vision or things were vibrating, I don't know  
5 which, but I realized that would be of any use to me. But I could  
6 the feel the energy of the airplane was very, very high. I don't  
7 know if that was because it was just lots of wind in my face, but  
8 there was a tremendous amount of noise. And as I said, the pitch  
9 attitude was abnormally low.

10 We were at what I believe to be 3,500 feet, not less than  
11 that, at the time of the accident. And sea level, I really -- I  
12 spent so much of the time remaining that, trying not to relive  
13 this, but certainly for the first 24 hours, I hadn't been able to  
14 do anything but this.

15 And I think my memory is very good about what I remember. It  
16 hasn't changed in that time. But my recollection was that time  
17 from impact with the other airplane until we hit the water was  
18 about 5 seconds. I just, every time I played it, it just doesn't  
19 seem that it was any longer than that, that things that happened,  
20 happened so quickly.

21 I back that up with military training, car accidents and  
22 things like that, personal experience. I know what temporal  
23 distortion is. And the things that I remember in a short period  
24 of time, it would be possible in temporal distortion to remember a  
25 whole bunch more things. And I remember every conscious thought,

1 and there wasn't a whole of them, which tells me there was not a  
2 lot of time between that and when we hit the water.

3 I remember that the passenger in the right seat was laying  
4 across me. I remember that, while it won't do any good, I took  
5 the condition lever and cut it off. I took the feather lever to  
6 feather. I don't think I touched the throttle at that point. And  
7 my eye caught my seat belt, and I thought, I better tighten that.  
8 And at that -- thereafter, it was just flying the airplane.

9 I was convinced that what I was doing right now, there was  
10 going to be a crash, going straight ahead, that there would not be  
11 any more control than what I had right now. I contemplated  
12 turning into the wind, and realized that the airplane, that  
13 control of the airplane was absolutely in question and I didn't  
14 think that was a smart move.

15 I just wanted to continue toward whatever it was going to  
16 land in. And it looked like right now it was heading toward  
17 George Inlet. George Inlet was coming at me very fast. There's a  
18 little bitty island where we impacted the water, that I thought,  
19 I'm going to hit that damn rock. And as we got closer, it changed  
20 to where -- landing there, but at the very last minute, I tried to  
21 change the vector from straight into the water to something of a  
22 flat attitude before we impacted. And to my surprise, the  
23 airplane flared. And again, it felt like we had a great deal of  
24 energy.

25 I can't speculate on the airspeed and it wouldn't be accurate



1 anyway based on all the wind that came in there, but it certainly  
2 felt to me like it was well above a hundred miles an hour.

3 The flat attitude was maintained until the first float hit.  
4 And at that point, the -- I have to assume, based on the violence  
5 of what happened after that, that one float was hanging, not  
6 tracking aerodynamic. So there was an immediate pitch-over, once  
7 we touched the first time. There was no skip or anything, from  
8 the first touch. It was an immediate and very violent pitch-over.

9 And when it did that, this was not a slow rate thing. It was  
10 very, very immediate, very violent. I waited for things to  
11 settle, and that happened very quickly too. It didn't take very  
12 long for it to stop doing what it was doing. I was underwater,  
13 and kind of let things stop for a second, and then it was time to  
14 get out.

15 I'm a distance swimmer. I'm not uncomfortable under water at  
16 all. I'm not disoriented being underwater. I realized I was  
17 tangled in cords, wires, other things, and my seatbelt, and so I  
18 unlatched my seatbelt, and slowly worked my way up, and didn't  
19 have to climb out of any wreckage. Once I separated away from the  
20 stuff that I remember on my left side, my eyes were open. I don't  
21 think I could have seen past the end of my arm. It was cloudy  
22 green water, but I don't know any more about what was around me or  
23 what I was climbing through.

24 I swam up, and was surprised how long it took me to get to  
25 the surface of the water. And again, that's coming from somebody

1 who spent a lot of time deep in the water. I remember thinking,  
2 I'm much deeper than I would have thought, and was concerned about  
3 running out of breath by the time I got there.

4 When I hit the surface, I was behind the right wing, which I  
5 can't explain yet. I'm going to speculate that the cockpit  
6 separated from the fuselage, which allowed me to get out without  
7 having to climb through anything. But I was strapped to  
8 something. I just don't know what I -- I don't know where that  
9 seat was.

10 I came up behind the right wing root, swam immediately to the  
11 door on the right side, where you guys -- this just happens to be  
12 here. This is what I was flying, and that's similar to what I  
13 hit. For reference, that airplane behind Kevin over there is what  
14 I hit, so that'll come into play in a minute. But there's not a  
15 very long distance between the wing root and the door here.

16 I opened the door. It was at least half submerged when I  
17 opened the door. And when I did, the other door was already open.  
18 I found out later on that the door had separated upon the initial  
19 impact, so that door was not even on the airplane.

20 I started yelling to the people to get out, get out, grab a  
21 life vest, get out, get out, standard airline stuff, just trying  
22 to get them not to be thinking about their disorientation, or  
23 their pain, and to be thinking on getting out of the airplane, and  
24 it was sinking.

25 When I first opened the door, the front bulkhead behind the

1 cockpit was already under water. It would have been hard for me  
2 to tell if there was anybody in the front seats, even if they were  
3 still sitting there. But it looked like everybody was there. And  
4 I was doing a mental computation of what we got to work with. And  
5 except for the lady who was in the front seat next to me, I felt  
6 at the time like I had everybody coming out.

7 And I had to go forward to get them out. I was pulling them  
8 out the right side, shoving them out the left side. They were all  
9 disoriented. Most were pretty vocal about their pain, their  
10 disorientation. One guy was hysterical in pain. I just had to  
11 push him out. And I tried to get the -- in that left-hand door  
12 opening, I tried to get the life vest that was above me.

13 My eyes were blurry, I'm speculating from jet fuel at that  
14 point. But I could feel it. I knew how it was fastened. And it  
15 was greasy with jet fuel. I could not get it out of the container  
16 that it was in. So I didn't get any life preservers out. And it  
17 was happening fast enough that it was more important to get the  
18 people away from the airplane.

19 I got them out of the airplane, started getting them back. I  
20 picked the lady on my side of the airplane who seemed to be the  
21 most disoriented, and unable to swim by herself, and grabbed her  
22 like you would as a lifeguard. Grabbed her and started swimming  
23 around the airplane, and the airplane went under water.

24 I would say the fuselage, as it sat in the water, was  
25 probably on a 30 to 45 degree nose-low angle and the wings were

1 level. And I would say, from the time I opened the door until the  
2 tail was under the water would be somewhere around 30 seconds, not  
3 longer than that.

4 And then we started working toward -- again, the coastline  
5 was not very far away, but it was blurry for me. But I started  
6 yelling to everybody, you know, start swimming toward the  
7 coastline. We're going to make it. Again, I'm trying to get  
8 these people away from panic, and I'm trying to manage them, and  
9 I'm trying to get them to hear my voice, keep working that way,  
10 work that way.

11 And I could see people already starting to float. I looked  
12 out to the water, and there was a, what appeared to be a private  
13 vessel. And I couldn't understand why he would not come closer.  
14 And then it occurred to me, this is a pretty rocky place. People  
15 that are familiar with the area -- and it was relatively low  
16 tide -- are not going to go into a known rocky place and run  
17 aground.

18 Then I realized, the person on that boat that's some distance  
19 away -- and in terms of distance, you know, probably a quarter of  
20 a mile away, has lowered a Zodiac raft with an outboard and is  
21 coming this way. I'm looking at all these people, and I count --  
22 as soon as the airplane goes down, I counted twice, out loud, and  
23 I was missing one person. But I had accounted for everybody else.  
24 And now I was just trying to herd everybody toward the shoreline.

25 And nobody, at this point, appeared to be sinking or anything

1 else that I could tell. I mean, it was all based on very quick  
2 looking. I swam with this lady as best I could. It's not that  
3 far to where the shoreline is, but given the amount of weight and  
4 clothes we all had, the heavy boots that I was wearing, you know,  
5 the progress was slow.

6 I was the first one to reach the shoreline with this lady. I  
7 could see that there was another guy that I was -- that we were  
8 really starting to lose. I mean, as a former lifeguard, he was  
9 starting to bob. His head was starting to go up. His chin was up  
10 in the air, and his wife was yelling, we're going to lose him.  
11 And she's yelling at the guy in the boat to get over here.

12 The individual that I'm talking about, and me, we were on one  
13 end of the group of people, and people were spread, distance-wise,  
14 I would guess we were probably at least a hundred feet from my end  
15 to the other end of the people. And he had started on the other  
16 end, and picking people up and working backwards, being very  
17 concerned about his prop and people. So he was moving very  
18 deliberately, very slowly, very carefully backwards, but he wasn't  
19 going to get to this guy in time.

20 And I was swimming to this guy because I knew I had to get to  
21 him before he went down. And the boat got to him right before I  
22 did. And -- but he was, this person was unable to hold on to the  
23 boat. His injuries would not allow that to occur. I tried to --  
24 I talked to the boat driver, said if you can nose us into the  
25 beach, I'll take care of these people.

1       He was concerned about hitting something with the prop, so I  
2 said, just get us where you could. I swam around to the other  
3 side of the boat, held onto this guy, held onto the boat, to get  
4 him. This individual, the whole time, was hysterical, in pain  
5 and, oh let me die, God take me, stuff like this. At times he  
6 was -- I don't think he was ever really with it. I think all the  
7 time he was in such pain that he was calling out the whole time.

8       Anyway, we got the boat to the -- within standing water. I  
9 carried this guy to the shoreline. The shoreline was very rocky.  
10 The rocks were the size of footballs, and they're very sharp. I  
11 felt it was important -- I thought, with the pain this guy was  
12 experiencing, and some of the disfigurement that I saw in his  
13 shoulder and his hip, that he likely had a broken back, and I  
14 thought it was better to keep him afloat, rather than get him out  
15 of the water onto the rocks.

16       I knew that the water was cold, and hypothermia was a  
17 concern, but frankly, I was very surprised that it didn't seem  
18 very cold to me. And for me, I felt like we could stay in the  
19 water a long time and it wasn't going to be life-threatening.

20       The other people, once I kind of got him where he was for a  
21 second and he wasn't going to go anywhere, then I was able to go  
22 check on each person, and assess, life-threatening or not. The  
23 only one -- everybody looked like they were suffering from broken  
24 bones.

25       Everybody, almost everybody was bleeding, from the head or

1 other places. And, you know, there were a lot of shoulder, arm  
2 injuries, so there would be people sitting on the rock. Those  
3 weren't life-threatening, so I didn't concern myself with them.  
4 There was one lady laying on her side, that, you know, I got in  
5 her face to see how she was doing. She said she had had a back  
6 fusion the year before, and wasn't sure -- you know, I was trying  
7 to assess how her back was. But she seemed to be okay, and I just  
8 told her, stay where you are, don't move.

9 And I checked each person. There was one guy that had a  
10 laceration on his leg, that to me, I couldn't tell from where I  
11 was looking -- and it's not I was spending a lot of time looking  
12 at him, but it didn't look to me like it needed a tourniquet, but  
13 somebody else felt it needed a tourniquet, and they were trying to  
14 find something to tie around his leg. He was clearly dazed. His  
15 arm was clearly broken. But it didn't seem life threatening.\

16 The other people I could see on the shoreline, up here, but  
17 they didn't -- number one, they were far away from where I was  
18 with the guy that I felt like needed the most attention. And I  
19 didn't go up and check on them, but they looked like they were --  
20 seemed like they were doing okay. Nobody was still in the water.  
21 Nobody was laying on the rocks.

22 So then, I spent most of my time with the guy that was in the  
23 most amount of pain. At the same time, the guy that brought the  
24 Zodiac also had the presence of mind to bring a radio, a  
25 transmitter, and he was standing on the shoreline very close to

1 us, transmitting, and trying to rally the forces.

2 I remember standing up to talk to him, said -- when I heard  
3 him start talking about the number of people, I said -- I got up  
4 and said, we had 11 souls on board, we now only have 10. I said,  
5 we're minus one. Then I went back to helping, talking to these  
6 people, but mostly talking to the guy, trying to keep him  
7 conscious.

8 And I, you know, wait and see if any airplanes were going to  
9 come over, any boats were coming over. I realized it could be a  
10 long time. Shortly after we got to the shore -- I guess I should  
11 back up and tell you, I wear a survival vest all the time. I'm  
12 one of those guys that believes that you get off -- you get to the  
13 shore with what you had on your back.

14 We had a really good survival back -- survival kit in the  
15 back of the airplane, and I could have reached it, but I was too  
16 busy doing -- trying to get people out of the airplane before it  
17 sank. I didn't get it, so we didn't have it. What we had was  
18 what I had. I didn't even inflate the vest until I realized, I  
19 got the stupid vest on, I should inflate it. So I did, and that  
20 helped get the lady that I was carrying back to the shoreline.

21 But in that range, I have an in-range, an inReach  
22 communicator. So I pulled that out immediately, and I kept that  
23 in a plastic bag. As soon as I pulled it out of my chest, I  
24 realized it was shattered, and it was full of water. I mean, I  
25 slid the slide to unlock the SOS button and pushed that anyway,



1 but I don't think it did anything. I mean, it was shattered. So  
2 I just kind of threw that on the beach.

3 And it wasn't much longer than that that probably radio calls  
4 were being made by the individual in the Avon anyway. The rest of  
5 that time was spent dealing with the guy who was hysterical. He  
6 wanted to die, Lord take me, things like that. And I was trying  
7 to get him to stay awake, not to give up, so I was talking to him  
8 a lot, right in his face. I had his head in my arm, and trying to  
9 assess his injuries, but his color was good, other than a little  
10 bit of blueness in his lips.

11 And I said, can you see me? And I said, look at me. And he  
12 looked at me, and his eyes -- his pupils were normal. Everything  
13 seemed normal. I didn't see anything. He said, I can't breathe,  
14 I can't breathe. Well I was holding him with his hand on his  
15 chest. I couldn't feel -- and I didn't palpitate so much, but I  
16 was checking for the shape of his body all the way around, didn't  
17 feel any disfigurement. I couldn't see any reason for him not to  
18 be able to breathe.

19 His breaths didn't appear to me to be short. And I tried to  
20 tell him, I said, your color is good. I think you're okay. I  
21 said, keep breathing, don't give up. And, you know, he's yelling,  
22 God take me, I hurt. And I said, have you ever been in the  
23 military? And --

24 I was trying to get him to focus on people that had been  
25 injured worse than him, who had stuck it out. And I was just

1 trying to get him to not give up, because he clearly wanted to  
2 give up. And he was trying to go to sleep. And I said no, keep  
3 looking at me. And his wife was sitting at his head. She had a  
4 separated or broken right shoulder. Her eyes were closed, but she  
5 was sitting erect. She was not saying much to him. They were  
6 communicating a little bit. He was communicating with her, a  
7 little bit, you know, Honey I love you, things like that.

8 And I asked him -- I asked him if he had kids. And I don't  
9 know if he said yes, three, or whether his wife did, at that  
10 point. And I said, tell me their names. He said, tell the kids  
11 goodbye for me, and things like that. I'm trying to get him to  
12 stay in the present, and not give up. And I'm thinking, if he's  
13 going to go, I'm going to have to start giving him CPR, or mouth  
14 to mouth. So I'm running through that in my mind of what I'm  
15 going to do when he stops breathing.

16 The helicopters are starting to show up, the Temsco  
17 helicopters. And then finally, the Coasties are starting to show  
18 up, and finally we get a guy on the beach, who is one of the -- I  
19 think, yeah, the fire department, and he had a medical kit, so I  
20 felt that we finally had somebody that's better trained than me  
21 that can help us here.

22 And I think he did kind of the same thing, went to everybody  
23 to find out, and then he was kind of working with my guy. There  
24 were a lot of people by that time, volunteers that wanted to get  
25 him into a boat, and I said, I don't to move him until we get a

1 backboard under him. I said, I'm concerned that his back is  
2 broken. I want to keep him in the water where he's somewhat  
3 buoyant, and not on the rocks that can cause further damage.

4 And, you know, the George Inlet large boats had come over,  
5 but they don't have a backboard in there, and the most they could  
6 come up with was a stick. I said, that's not going to be big  
7 enough. I said, let's just keep him here till we get a proper  
8 backboard. I figured the Coast Guard would have that.

9 Eventually, they did have a backboard, and they brought a  
10 couple of litters. And then, our focus at that point was to try  
11 to get him in the litter without causing more damage. We did  
12 that, and we carried him across to the Zodiac, so that they could  
13 get him out to the Coast Guard boat.

14 So we got him in the boat. I sat with him for a minute. And  
15 once I realized that he was in good hands and that he wasn't going  
16 to slide off the board, which it seemed like that was going to be  
17 what happened -- once they had him under control, then he was no  
18 longer a problem, I started working with the other people.

19 One of the Taquan airplanes had gotten there about the same  
20 time. And our chief pilot, who has, unfortunately, a lot of  
21 experience with this kind of thing, was the first one off, and he  
22 told me, you need to go with -- go get on the boat, or go get in  
23 the helicopter or something. He said, you're injured, and you're  
24 probably in shock. And I said, I'm not leaving until this is --  
25 anyway, I had other responsibilities.

1        So, at that point I started working on the most injured,  
2 trying to make sure they were okay, and I was also trying to let  
3 these people know that I'm still here, I'm still looking after  
4 them, and that I'm concerned about them. And again, I think, I  
5 tried to establish a rapport with them in the beginning. And  
6 while this was happening, I was still trying to let them know that  
7 I was concerned for their well-being, and was checking on them,  
8 going to each one as necessary.

9        Things were happening around me, that I'm mildly aware of.  
10 Other helicopters coming here, I can see, a couple of them have  
11 the ability to carry litter patients. They were starting to get a  
12 couple of litters, which I thought very good because I was  
13 concerned that the lady laying on her side earlier might have an  
14 injury to her back. I was pretty sure that the guy that I'd been  
15 dealing with had been taken care of with a backboard, but I didn't  
16 know about anybody else.

17        At that point, I think I was working with the most injured  
18 man's wife. She was sitting on the rock, in what I would consider  
19 to be an uncomfortable position, so I was kneeling with her with  
20 my leg behind her, so that she could lean against me if she needed  
21 to. So that's who I stayed with for a while. The paramedic was  
22 trying to get -- yeah, he said he was a paramedic. That's  
23 important. That was very comforting to hear. The guy that had  
24 the fire department thing wasn't just a basic EMT, he was a  
25 paramedic.

1       He was trying to get an IV in her, and just to prep her. And  
2 he didn't have a knife, or didn't have the tools. I did, so we --  
3 I helped him cut the stuff off her arm, and tried to hold her arm  
4 up while he was getting an IV, but everybody was hypothermic, and  
5 it was hard to find a vein. In fact, during the day, I think  
6 everybody got stuck multiple times, just trying to find a place to  
7 get an IV in.

8       At a certain point, they were -- we had done as much as they  
9 could with her. I think she was ambulatory enough that we could  
10 stand her up, and walk her to whatever her conveyance back was. I  
11 don't even remember what that was. At that point, she wasn't the  
12 biggest concern.

13       And then -- actually, I take that back. We lifted her up and  
14 put her in a litter. We put her in a litter, and then we walked  
15 her with the litter to the helicopter. And we got her in the  
16 helicopter and that's when they said, you are going in this  
17 helicopter.

18       And I figured at that point, pretty much everybody was off,  
19 so I didn't feel like I was abandoning anybody if I left. I knew  
20 there was a lot of blood on my face, and a couple of people had  
21 said something, so I figured, you know, I might be injured. I  
22 don't know. At that point, I didn't feel anything, didn't feel  
23 any injuries except for lower back stuff. And they said, you need  
24 to go in this, so I said okay, so I rode that Hughes 500 back to  
25 Temsco, where the ambulance was.

1           What transpires from there, really was -- you know, and I sat  
2 with that lady in the ambulance. I held her hand and talked to  
3 her a little bit, but you got to let the medical assessors do what  
4 they're doing. And they got us undressed, got stuff, and then we  
5 all went into the emergency room. And from there on, it's not  
6 really much in the way of an investigation. That's all I got to  
7 say.

8           MR. SAUER: I apologize. I do have to step out, but I  
9 appreciate your time and your assistance with us, with this part  
10 of the investigation. I know it's not easy, so thank you. But  
11 Dan, I --

12          MR. QUINN: Okay.

13          MR. SAUER: -- need to step out for --

14          MR. BANNING: Thank you. Do you want to take a little break  
15 now?

16          MR. QUINN: I think this would be a good time, actually, I --  
17 yeah.

18          MR. BANNING: It might be -- yeah. Get a drink a of water  
19 and --

20          MR. QUINN: Yeah.

21          MR. BECK: If it's okay with you -- I don't need one. It's  
22 up to you guys.

23          MR. BANNING: Well, let's go ahead and --

24          DR. BRAMBLE: I wouldn't mind a short break.

25          MR. BANNING: Yeah. Let's go ahead --

1 DR. BRAMBLE: Go to the bathroom and --

2 MR. BANNING: That's good. Perfect.

3 (Off the record.)

4 (On the record.)

5 MR. BANNING: Okay. We are now recording. This is Brice  
6 Banning, and we are, at 11:05 in the morning. And Aaron Sauer has  
7 left the interview.

8 BY MR. BANNING:

9 Q. So, thank you. And we'd just like to ask -- I'd like to ask,  
10 start with some follow-up questions --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- to the account, if that's fine. You talked about the  
13 route of flight. Do you recall when you left, was it Rudyard Bay  
14 that you picked up --

15 A. Rudyard Bay has a dock.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. That is where we always pick these people up. That's where  
18 the boat drops them off --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- and that's where we pick them up. It's a floating dock in  
21 the middle of the bay.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So that's where I left.

24 Q. And do you remember about what time you left Rudyard Bay?

25 A. Not without looking at a manifest, but I can tell you that

1 we, we can probably backdate that time, almost exact, by looking  
2 at the other air plans and what time I called back here.

3 Q. Okay. Okay.

4 A. I know how long it takes me to get from here, in the Otter,  
5 to land there, on a basic tour, because I'm always to watch on  
6 time, and there's a good clock right in front of me, which we  
7 don't have in the Beaver, so I have been using that a lot. I know  
8 how long it takes me to land, and how long it takes me to get  
9 back.

10 My recollection, at the time of the accident, was I was  
11 thinking to myself, I have 5 minutes before I land, to be on time.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And if we can look at the time that that tour left -- and at  
14 this point, it's escaped me, because it's an hour and 15 for us.  
15 So to make good on that an hour and 15, you know, I was about 5  
16 minutes prior to that at the accident, and I -- you can back that  
17 up probably 20 minutes and be within single digits of when I  
18 departed the dock.

19 Q. Okay, yeah. No problem. And the route of flight for the  
20 accident flight, was it a typical route of flight? Was there  
21 anything abnormal about that route of flight, compared to a --

22 A. I will tell you, the way that I choose to do it, having been  
23 the guy in the Beaver before that, and knowing that we're all, a  
24 lot of airplanes flying the same speed, within the confines of the  
25 fjord are, the benefit to the turbine is that it allows you to



1 climb away from the rest of the traffic pretty quickly. So I do  
2 that, and while everybody else is down a little bit lower, showing  
3 the sights, I'm riding right against the right hill, and doing a  
4 slow, climbing turn, and until I'm 90 degrees across what we call  
5 the Beam Canal, which is pointing us on the way back.

6 People in the slower airplanes are going to be working to my  
7 left or south, going back. And again, that airplane can't climb,  
8 the Beaver cannot climb as fast, so they're not able to climb over  
9 the terrain. I'm able to deconflict by doing a straight line  
10 back. And I can minimize the en route time back to Ketchikan by  
11 doing a couple of straight lines, one of them being from where I  
12 just described leaving there, straight across Beam Canal to what  
13 we call Manzanita Lake, and Aqua Lake, where the high terrain was.

14 I'll weave through that some, a little bit -- how gracefully  
15 depending on how, whether there's turbulence or not. And then,  
16 once I leave that, then it's a straight line to where the accident  
17 occurred. So that's the route of flight, primarily because it  
18 allows me to get high, away from turbulence, make straight lines  
19 and deconflict with other airplanes.

20 Q. And was that -- so was that route flight any different than  
21 your normal route of flight? It sounds like it was the same  
22 flight, route of flight you fly fairly often?

23 A. My route of flight is somewhat fluid, depending on what,  
24 where I decide to land when I'm out there.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. If I was in a Beaver, I would almost always land somewhere in  
2 the Rudyard Fjord, in the seawater in that fjord. Again, more  
3 airplanes in the same place is conflict. In the Otter, I had the  
4 benefit of picking lakes, some of them higher than where the  
5 Beavers typically are, or the back of the fjords where the, where  
6 our Beavers usually don't have time to go. But I will tell you,  
7 as of yesterday, the three tours that I did all had the same route  
8 of flight.

9 Q. Okay. All right. And was there any communication or  
10 coordination with other aircraft? It sounded like you noticed a  
11 couple groups of airplanes on the ADS-B at one point. Was there  
12 any --

13 A. Yes, there is.

14 Q. -- communication with those, with --

15 A. We have -- we try to operate in groups, so nobody is  
16 operating what Kevin calls a solo contractor. And we try to do  
17 that. In my case, we had one other Otter, flown by Brentwood  
18 Wiest. Brentwood Wiest is 75 years old, and has at least 10,000  
19 hours on floats. He's a native of Southeast Alaska, has more  
20 experience than five guys, and the stories to tell it, and he's a  
21 very good mentor. So he is somebody who has my trust, and we  
22 communicate a lot. He was the other Otter operator.

23 In order for us to work as a team, we communicated about  
24 where we were going to land together, and had been doing so that  
25 day. I don't think that -- I think when I did what we call the

1 boat fly, which is where I pick people up, I think Brentwood was  
2 doing a Misty Fjords tours, where he departs Ketchikan with a  
3 group of people, lands somewhere in the Misty Fjords, and then  
4 returns with those same people all the way to Ketchikan.

5 I remember his last call, because I'd been mentally tracking  
6 him all day long, because in that brand new airplane, we don't  
7 have the ADS-B working yet. I can't see him on the screen. And  
8 we had transmitted -- that airplane only had been flying a couple  
9 of days, so we had been talking to each other the whole time,  
10 saying okay, Brentwood, understand we can't see you. So he'd been  
11 doing a very good job of broadcasting his position so we knew.

12 And I'd been telling him, we had briefed down here on the  
13 ground, so that we would operate together, where are you planning  
14 on landing, where would you like to land? And he said, I'll go  
15 wherever you go. And then things happen, separations. It takes  
16 longer to load people than it does other times. You're not always  
17 able to leave at the same time. But as long as we transmit where  
18 we're going to land, then nobody's lost. I made sure that  
19 Brentwood knew where I was going each time, and I could hear his  
20 position reports, what he was doing.

21 Now I was usually ahead of him, excuse me, when I landed, so  
22 if he said where he was going to land, I wouldn't have heard it on  
23 the radio. But when we were -- when I was coming back, you know,  
24 people that were going the other way, or of -- there was no  
25 importance to their radio call other than where they were and

1 where they were going, you know, I didn't really pay a lot of  
2 attention to that. You're listening to the radio to deconflict  
3 and paint a mental picture of where airplanes are, primarily to  
4 know not only where, in this case, Brentwood was, but to make sure  
5 that there's not anybody transmitting a position that's ahead of  
6 you.

7       So I remember listening to him, and that's one of the last  
8 radio calls I actually remember paying attention to. And if there  
9 were other radio calls after that one, I don't remember what it  
10 was. The importance of that statement is, well, kind of two  
11 things: my transmissions, my philosophy about those  
12 transmissions, as well as what I heard. I do not remember hearing  
13 the other airplane transmitting.

14       I do remember looking at the ADS-B for any airplanes ahead of  
15 me, and did not see one where this accident occurred. But at the  
16 time that I did that, that was back somewhere near the Carroll  
17 Inlet, and I don't remember if I did it after that, to see if  
18 there was somebody right where we were, but I don't remember  
19 hearing him transmit. And I can tell you that if I had heard him,  
20 it would obviously have raised my awareness. But I did not hear  
21 that, didn't see anything on the scope, and was not expecting to  
22 see an airplane.

23       That doesn't mean I'm not clearing for an airplane, but I  
24 didn't see the airplane. I don't know if that's because it was a  
25 white airplane on a white background, that snow. Whether I didn't

1 look that way, I just don't know.

2 When I started the turn, that slow turn to the 90, I don't  
3 know if I raised up the side of the window and created a blind  
4 spot. I just don't know. I did that same route of flight three  
5 times yesterday. I remember transmitting, Lower Mahoney for Upper  
6 Mahoney at 3.5. I just don't remember if I made it on that call.

7 Q. And do you remember the last transmission that you did? I  
8 mean, do you --

9 A. The one that I remember making for sure was on the company  
10 Fox-Mike.

11 Q. Okay. Is there a common frequency that folks are using out  
12 there with that --

13 A. Yes. We have areas with specific boundaries to switch  
14 frequencies.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I was on 122.75 --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- which was the appropriate frequency for where the accident  
19 occurred.

20 Q. Okay. And you had mentioned, I thought, and correct me if  
21 I'm wrong, switching a radio to Ketchikan CTAF. Was that --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- another com? Was that a standby?

24 A. Same com. No, it's the same com. It's a flip-flop.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Standard King radio.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And it's got a preset feature. So I flip-flop, as well as  
4 pushing another button that allows me to get to the presets.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And, but you have to cycle through those, to get through  
7 the -- and whether you go clockwise or counterclockwise, you might  
8 go through four frequencies before you get the one you're after.  
9 But it takes a minute, little bit of a distraction.

10 But yeah, so I would go -- I'm on 22.75, and whatever was in  
11 the backup, typically I'm one frequency ahead, all the time in the  
12 backup. But that would have been selecting the ATIS, pulling it  
13 up, holding the squelch out, listening to the ATIS, not very long,  
14 pushing it back in, and then presetting the next frequency, which  
15 in this case would have been the flight service frequency.

16 Q. Okay. And --

17 A. 23.6.

18 Q. And of 23.6. So prior to the collision, you had been on  
19 22.75 --

20 A. And was on 22.75 at the time of the accident.

21 Q. And was on 22.75, but you had listened to the ATIS and then  
22 shut it off, and gone to 23.6 on the standby, but still had 22.75  
23 in the active?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I think if we pulled the radio out of the water, I think  
2 that's what you'd find.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. The worst -- otherwise, you'd see 22.75 in the active, and  
5 the ATIS frequency still in the standby.

6 Q. Okay. Okay. Was there anything -- the communication  
7 procedures that you did, was there anything abnormal about what --  
8 or was that just pretty standard for --

9 A. There wasn't anything abnormal, as far as I'm concerned, but  
10 you again need to understand something about the way I operate,  
11 because maybe it'll paint a picture for you. If everybody  
12 transmitted their position at all the time, there would be too  
13 much clutter on the radios.

14 There are times where it's appropriate and there are times  
15 where it's not. There are some people that operate here who just,  
16 verbal diarrhea about what they're doing. There are other people  
17 that don't talk at all, and they surprise you when they pop up.  
18 As a military guy, moving fast, you keep your communications clear  
19 and concise. So I don't talk if I don't need to talk.

20 When I'm in an area where I might be a conflict, or if there  
21 are other airplanes that show up on the ADS-B, then I'm more  
22 verbal about my position and where I'm going. But that doesn't  
23 mean I'm going to be talking the whole time about where I am.  
24 That requires an awareness of the other airplanes around you,  
25 which I believe I had a pretty good picture of the other airplanes

1 that were around me. It's just, you can't fly airplanes and not  
2 be aware of the stuff that's going around you.

3 Again, it's an Air Force thing. You just, you're painting a  
4 three-dimensional picture of where people are, and how that looks  
5 raises or lowers the priority for those position report calls.  
6 And that's why I say I remember making the calls right over the  
7 lake once, if not twice yesterday, but I don't remember if it was  
8 at the time of this flight or whether it was one or two of the  
9 flights before that.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So if you were to ask somebody, pick a random number of  
12 people in this community that flies around there, some might say,  
13 Lou doesn't make enough calls, Lou doesn't make calls everywhere  
14 he goes, and some would say, Lou makes the appropriate number of  
15 calls. I can't speak to that.

16 Q. Okay. Thank you. And can you characterize the operating  
17 environment near the time of the collision, meaning weather, sun,  
18 clouds?

19 A. Earlier in -- the prior 2 days were bright blue days with  
20 westerly winds, and turbulence because we have a westerly wind.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. The winds had shift to more of a southeast, and that meant  
23 less turbulence, but usually when the wind blows here, in this  
24 part of the state, it's going to bring weather. So, clear skies  
25 are from the west. The weather starts coming in from the



1 southeast. The weather had started to bring high cirrus, but  
2 where we were operating was clear and visibility unlimited. I  
3 don't know if it was clear blue above me, or whether it was  
4 overcast with high cirrus, but there was definitely -- there was  
5 no obstructions to visibility. There was no weather. It was a  
6 beautiful day, with no encumbrances at all.

7 Q. Okay. And was there any terrain that was dictating your  
8 route of flight out to --

9 A. Yes. Yeah, terrain was a major player in what I was doing.  
10 My arrival was set up. We -- 3,500 feet in order to cross what we  
11 were crossing, would be what I would consider about the minimum  
12 for me. You might be able to do it at 3,000 feet, but I'm not  
13 doing it at 3,000 feet. That would not give me the opportunity to  
14 deal with an engine failure and get to a place where I could land.

15 Now you can't always do that. There are going to be times  
16 when you don't preserve that. But I would say, by and large, I  
17 think that altitude provided me the opportunity to have a backup  
18 plan. Where I was going to cross, and the way I was anticipating  
19 doing it, was to show the falls on the right as I made a right 90  
20 degree turn, and then started slowly making my way down the  
21 terrain on the other side to put myself over the top of the lakes  
22 that we know as Ketchikan Lakes on this side of the ridgeline.

23 And we thread our ways down those lakes until you pop out on  
24 the side, where you can see -- you're essentially operating --  
25 you're coming out of the mountains 90 degrees to the normal

1 traffic departure and arrival flow. So it gives you the  
2 opportunity to be above the airplanes that are arriving and  
3 departing, to announce that you're coming in and to listen to  
4 other airplanes that would be there, as well as look at the ADS-B  
5 screen and see who's there. So yes, terrain was definitely part  
6 of what I was doing.

7 Q. Okay. Can you speak a little bit about the time of the  
8 collision, what was capturing your attention, whether it was  
9 terrain, just anything, visual attention, things of that nature?  
10 Could you speak to that a little bit?

11 A. Yeah. Again, in drawing this mental line about where my  
12 flight path was going to be, now you're managing that flight path.  
13 So I have altitude. I've already told you that I was slowing  
14 down, so that when I went over that first 90 that I was about 105  
15 or so. And those are round numbers, but that's my estimate. That  
16 was my plan.

17 Q. Sure.

18 A. Putting the airplane in a position where the people on the  
19 right side could see, so that means not being too close, not being  
20 too far. And in order to be graceful, it wouldn't be go straight  
21 and then make a 90-degree turn and do this. It was a, you know, a  
22 very fluid turn with a very slow roll rate, in order to make that  
23 turn. But as I said earlier, I don't remember whether I had  
24 started to raise the wing or not. It was -- if I hadn't, it was  
25 imminent.

1 Q. Okay. The Chelton unit, does it have an auditory traffic  
2 alert? Do you know?

3 A. No. It does not.

4 Q. It does not? So it's only visual on the screen. And do you  
5 know if the TAWS, do you know where the TAWS was selected? Was it  
6 in inhibit mode, or?

7 A. In our airplanes, TAWS inhibit is a verbal inhibit. You  
8 still get -- the Chelton screen will still show you terrain.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. But if you did not have the verbal inhibit, it would be  
11 talking to you all the time.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So the TAWS, you'll find that switch is in the inhibit mode.

14 Q. Okay. Okay. And do you recall the display range, about the  
15 time of the event?

16 A. I do not know. And --

17 Q. No problem.

18 A. -- as far as range, the only way I -- if I wanted to know the  
19 range, and there are times when we use the range rings for  
20 determining visibility.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It's been so clear here this spring that hasn't been an  
23 issue. But at the time of this, when the airplane started getting  
24 close, you want to know how far away you're looking, and in that  
25 case, I do look at the range. But for the most part, for me, I'm

1 just expanding or deselecting. I use that a lot, to make the  
2 picture bigger or smaller --

3 Q. Sure.

4 A. -- as to what increment it was on, or whether I was in a 10-  
5 mile scale, a 5-mile scale or 2-1/2, I can't answer that.

6 Q. Yeah. No problem. Do you know and -- where everybody was  
7 sitting in the aircraft?

8 A. I cannot tell you what person was sitting in what seat.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I can absolutely tell you where two people were sitting. The  
11 lady that was in the, what you would call the copilot seat, and  
12 the individual who I said they were putting a tourniquet on his  
13 leg. He was sitting in the left rear door, at the left rear door.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Everybody else is just kind of fuzzy.

16 Q. Yeah. No problem. And do you know how many of the  
17 passengers were able to, or if any were able to get life  
18 preservers put on?

19 A. I don't know if anybody got one put on. My recollection is  
20 at the most, one.

21 Q. Okay. And you're not sure if they actually physically donned  
22 the life vest?

23 A. I'm going to guess that she did. It doesn't make sense that  
24 she would have gotten it out, and I say she, because I want to say  
25 that there was one lady who did get one on, and she later provided

1 that as a pillow for someone who was prone.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And we found one life preserver on the shoreline --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- after the fact. But I couldn't get any more, and  
6 everybody else was too disoriented to --

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. I mean, you can -- get out, get out, grab a life vest there.  
9 These people all had broken bones. They were just trying to  
10 float. They're trying to get out.

11 Q. Sure. And the life vests, are they in the seat pockets in  
12 front of the --

13 A. No. They're right above their heads. You absolutely can't  
14 miss them.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And they had all been directed. They knew where they were.

17 Q. And are they the rip-open yellow --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- that you don? Okay. Okay. And it sounded like your  
20 survival vest had floatation -- that you wore all the time?

21 A. All the time.

22 Q. And did you -- you did, it sounded like, in your earlier  
23 recount, activate that?

24 A. Yeah, once I was halfway to the shoreline, and realized, I  
25 got the stupid thing on, I ought to inflate it, so I did.

1 Q. Okay. Training. It sounded like you -- this is the start of  
2 your second season. And did you do any IOE when you initially  
3 started, that you -- with Taquan?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And can you explain what that IOE looked like for me, just a  
6 little bit?

7 A. I flew with two instructors. The first was our chief pilot,  
8 Clark Hassel.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Clark and I think in lockstep about what's important and  
11 what's not, and it was important for me to fly with him because  
12 his training is so good in such a short amount of time. The other  
13 instructor I flew with is highly experienced, but not at  
14 experienced at all instructing. And while his intentions are  
15 good, his procedural steps and flows will not have been honed for  
16 instruction. They work for him, but they might not be good to  
17 teach.

18 Clark, on the other hand, will have given enough thought to  
19 his stuff to simply it so you can't screw it up. So my training  
20 with him was the initial training. I came up in February, for a  
21 week, to get some observation in the Otter, and to get some formal  
22 training if that was possible. And there was some concern in  
23 February that we didn't have the blessing of the FAA for a formal  
24 training program, or for me to have any formal training. So we  
25 didn't get as much training there as I would have liked to have

1 gotten. But it gave me the opportunity to practice the flows  
2 enough, that when I went home in the months between February and  
3 April that I'd been able to chair fly enough time that my  
4 procedures were just needing to get honed when I came back and  
5 flew with Clark. It's not like he was starting with somebody who  
6 was brand new.

7 In addition, as I've said, I've been pretty lucky about the  
8 number of airplanes I've flown. The more you fly, the more they  
9 become the same. And I've flown a lot of turbine stuff, a lot of  
10 turboprop stuff. One of those is a King Air with the same engine.  
11 So when I flew the Otter, even though I didn't have very much time  
12 in it, I didn't -- I did not feel like I was inexperienced in the  
13 airplane.

14 And it's important for me to convey to you guys, the accident  
15 that occurred, while the numbers might say something else, my  
16 inexperience in that airplane, I believe had little or nothing to  
17 do with my inability to see. I was not task saturated. I was  
18 managing a number of things that had to be managed. I don't think  
19 there was any more because I was in an airplane that I was new to  
20 than it would have been in any other airplane. At the point  
21 during that flight, I was very comfortable in the airplane. I  
22 felt like I was wearing the airplane, and I didn't have to  
23 concentrate on doing things.

24 So I would say my training was very good. The IOE that I  
25 had, to the point where I had the check ride, and was blessed at

1 that point, I can't tell you how many hours I had, but I felt  
2 very, very comfortable in the airplane. At that point, I was --  
3 IOE was not required for -- the only IOE that was required beyond  
4 what I had at that point was IOE that was not tour related, where  
5 we go to deliver mail.

6 I think it was -- I looked forward to that very much, because  
7 that's where the real training occurs with regard to flying this  
8 airplane on the water, sailing it, dealing with strong winds,  
9 trying to get them on a dock, in unusual situation when you're  
10 single pilot, might have to tie yourself up.

11 Everything that we're doing here, we have people on the dock.  
12 And out there in Rudyard, the dock, if that's where you chose to  
13 go, is not generally crowded, and not generally as high-threat.  
14 So it's something that I would feel comfortable going there. So  
15 after my training and check ride, with however many hours I had,  
16 and feeling pretty comfortable with the airplane, I was released  
17 alone only to fly tours.

18 Everything about where I was going, what I was doing during  
19 the tour was old hat, so it didn't add to my workload. And it  
20 gave me the opportunity just to get reps in the airplane, get  
21 comfortable in the airplane. And that's -- and I don't know how  
22 many tours I'd done at that point, but I had, I'd done many, and I  
23 was very, very comfortable in the airplane.

24 In addition, I had some -- the rest of my IOE did occur with  
25 the other instructor, who is Chuck Perkins. And Chuck and I did a



1 lot of work in, for me, some pretty challenging wind conditions  
2 where we went. The actual flying to the places we go, there  
3 really isn't much training there. In that respect, I reverted to  
4 a, you know, a King Air pilot, how do you operate a turbine, which  
5 might be different than the way another Otter operator might have  
6 operated it.

7 But that training was really, really good training, because  
8 it was challenging conditions. At one point that we went some  
9 place where the -- we went to a place called Waterfall, which is  
10 exposed to the Pacific, and the winds were very strong. It was a  
11 very small dock available to us. And Chuck and I mutually decided  
12 it makes more sense for him to do this. So the IOE at that point  
13 would have been terminated. He gets in the seat. I still get  
14 lots of valuable training watching to see how he's going to do it.

15 But we let him put it on the dock. We got out, did our job.  
16 And I said all right, this is how I would get us off the dock.  
17 But again, it was pretty dicey, and in his judgment it made more  
18 sense for him to do it himself. He did do that. Then we swapped  
19 seats once we were away, out on the open water, and then  
20 completed.

21 So we did enough of that to complete the required amount of  
22 training, the required amount of IOE. And at that point, while I  
23 recognize the value of training and would love to have those guys  
24 with me for a long time, I felt adequately prepared to do most  
25 things. There are places that I would not go. There are

1 conditions that I would not go to, that would think somebody with  
2 a lot more time with me would be capable, but I'm not there yet.

3 Q. Sure.

4 A. So, as far as IOE, I felt more than adequately prepared to do  
5 what I was assigned to do.

6 Q. Okay. Yeah. And the -- and just for some clarification for  
7 me, you mentioned February and some IOE. Was that February of  
8 this year or February when you initially came on?

9 A. Actually, I did it both times.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Last year I came up for a week, and -- last February, you  
12 know, to get some -- to evaluate this outfit --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- and give them a opportunity to evaluate me. And this  
15 year -- I was not seeking the Otter job. I was pretty happy in  
16 the Beaver. Last year I was approached to fly the Otter. And I  
17 said I would if they needed it. I didn't want to quit flying the  
18 Beaver. And once it seemed like that was going to be the plan,  
19 then I didn't want to come up here and have to learn all the stuff  
20 from the beginning.

21 I came up here in February so I could learn the airplane,  
22 start developing those flows, get any training that I could, so  
23 that when I came up here, it wasn't the first time I'd seen the  
24 airplane.

25 Q. Sure.

1 A. So in February, there was nothing formal there. There wasn't  
2 IOE at all.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But it was very valuable training --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- that allowed me to go home and chair fly, mentally fly.  
7 At that time in February, I took pictures of the inside of the  
8 airplane. I already had an operator's manual. I had systems  
9 manuals that I'd gotten myself, some of which came from King Airs  
10 that I'd flown in the past that I always keep. And when I chair  
11 flew, I was chair flying with pictures, and mental preparation.

12 Q. Okay. And during your IOE, if you will, did some of that --  
13 it sounded like, but just for -- provide some clarity, did it  
14 include flying tour routes and reporting points, or do you recall?

15 A. I do not remember if somebody rode me as adult supervision  
16 while I demonstrated my ability to do that. But I remember myself  
17 riding with a couple of senior guys, primarily Chuck, with me in  
18 the right seat, watching how he operated, to hear his timing, his  
19 flow, how much he talks, what he says, because the way you  
20 operate, the faster airplane out there is going to be a different  
21 route.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. You're going to see different things. And it was very  
24 valuable, but I don't recall if I ever had anybody ride shotgun  
25 with me to verify that I knew what I was doing.

1 Q. But it sounds like you did, if you -- you did, at the very  
2 least, have some ride-a-longs --

3 A. Oh yeah, I did.

4 Q. -- in the Otter with somebody.

5 A. Yeah. A couple or three, anyway --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- where I watched guys that I respected, watched how they  
8 operated.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. We went to different places. And it was with Chuck each  
11 time, and Chuck knew that I was coming into the airplane, and that  
12 he was going to be part of my training in there. So he took it  
13 upon himself -- it was informal, but to show me different places  
14 that I could go, different ways to get there, different concerns  
15 in the some of the terrain areas. So there was a lot of informal  
16 training there.

17 Q. Okay. And then, do you recall training that you received,  
18 any training that you received on the Chelton?

19 A. Yes. We've -- there is a Chelton set here --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- on a desk. And at the beginning of last year, we spent a  
22 lot of time learning it, because it's not intuitive. It's not  
23 like anything else. It's very antiquated, a lot of steps to get  
24 basic information, stuff you'd get on another screen very, very  
25 easily. So we spent a lot of time on that. And then during the

1 seasons last year, having flown that whole system, I was able to  
2 distill it to the point where I used just the minimum, what I felt  
3 was necessary.

4       There are a great deal of functions within that thing that  
5 you can do other things. I didn't trouble myself with that. So  
6 by the time I got -- this time, I came back again this year,  
7 reviewed on the simulator, I felt very comfortable at the time I  
8 was flying the airplane that, for my purposes, I knew what I had  
9 available and what I needed.

10 Q.    Okay.

11 A.    I will also say that I didn't think very highly of the  
12 Chelton. It is an old system that is not maintained. And it's  
13 very, very common for it to either go black -- I won't say, go  
14 black, but for information to not be reflected until some part  
15 later in the flight.

16       For example, I was observing a check ride from somebody else,  
17 and the airspeed indicator didn't come alive until after we were  
18 airborne. And that's just the Chelton. Most of us who've been  
19 around and who grew up on round dials, we look at the Chelton for  
20 situational awareness, but we rely on the round dials.

21       The Chelton is like any other electric box. If it goes  
22 black, you better know where you are. And you better be  
23 comfortable using the raw data. And those round dials are always  
24 honest. So the Chelton, to me, is a system I would not -- I would  
25 hope was not all I had available.

1 I notice that the round dials acted as I expected round  
2 dials -- you know, they would -- in different phases of flight,  
3 they were giving me what I thought was credible information. I  
4 can't always say that's the case in the Chelton. But the Chelton  
5 was our only screen for traffic, and in that respect, it does a  
6 very good job.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I always keep a ForeFlight on my phone, attached to the  
9 screen, for two reasons. One, I've got -- that phone is where  
10 I -- where the music comes from. But more important than that, I  
11 want a moving map, and not because I use it, that I need that for  
12 a moving map, but when the weather is bad, your situational  
13 awareness is greatly enhanced by a moving map display.

14 The Chelton's shortcoming in poor weather, where you're down  
15 near what your minimum allowable weather is, is that as you get  
16 near terrain, the screen will go yellow and then red, to notify  
17 you of terrain. But when it does, it blanks out that part which  
18 you need.

19 When you get -- for example, if I go from one arm of an  
20 inlet, cross some land, to connect with another arm on the inlet,  
21 and I have, you know, I'm plenty high, that screen could be -- the  
22 water in front of me could be painted red because there's terrain  
23 around. It's of no use to me, whereas with the ForeFlight, and we  
24 use another app called Gaia, which is, it's G-a-i-a, I had it on  
25 my phone because I'm a hiker, but it's topo maps. And it does a

1 very good job of providing detail and place names.

2 So if some guy calls me and says he's Narrow Point for  
3 Ketchikan at 2,500, I don't know where Narrow Point is. I can  
4 look at Gaia and say, well it's not near me, or hell, it's right  
5 there.

6 So I always kept those two up for situational awareness. I  
7 would look at the map on the Chelton, but by and large I was not  
8 using it for that. There would be times where, you know, I could  
9 expand the scale, in some of the places that we go to deliver  
10 mail. It was useful there. But I preferred to have this as a  
11 standby, or as a go-to if the Chelton went away, or -- I just  
12 wanted a backup. Whether this one died and I had this one, or  
13 this one died and I had this one, I wouldn't want to rely on the  
14 Chelton as a primary.

15 Q. Okay. And just to clarify, you said you did not think highly  
16 of the Chelton; is that correct?

17 A. That is correct.

18 Q. Okay. And then, the ForeFlight that you have on your phone,  
19 does it show any traffic?

20 A. It does not.

21 Q. Okay. And at the time of the collision, do you recall if you  
22 had the ForeFlight map up on your phone?

23 A. I did.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. But it doesn't mean I was -- you know, I wasn't using it for

1 navigation.

2 Q. Okay. Right.

3 A. It was just -- it was riding --

4 Q. Just there.

5 A. -- right there, so if I need to, you know, hit the -- there's  
6 a button on ForeFlight which you guys are probably aware of, where  
7 it will center you on the map.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. You know, there are times when I would do that --

10 Q. Sure.

11 A. -- but I didn't do it then.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. You can do the same thing with the Gaia.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Let me back up and explain my feelings about the Chelton.

16 Q. Sure.

17 A. If I'd had what I have now in the Chelton 20 years ago, I'd  
18 love to have had it. But knowing the advances and what's  
19 available, it's not near what's available. It's not near what's  
20 needed. It's -- in an operation in Alaska, and maybe we'll cover  
21 this later on, but where these airplanes operate, in this  
22 environment, the Chelton wasn't set up for this.

23 The ForeFlight -- and I'm not saying ForeFlight as a trade  
24 name is great, but the idea of what ForeFlight gives you is a  
25 moving map, is better. The shortcoming of ForeFlight is that the



1 map you're navigating on is a sectional, and the scale of the  
2 sectional doesn't go down close enough to give you the detail when  
3 you need detail.

4 Gaia, on the other hand, although it was not intended for  
5 aviation, gives us a topo map with greater detail. But it  
6 requires you to stare at the map later and read the contours to  
7 see what terrain you're in, where a sectional is color coded and  
8 you could tell if you're in the mountains.

9 But when you're going down a fjord, for example, at least on  
10 the sectional, you show blue in front of you, and some color of  
11 amber or brown on the right and left. In the ForeFlight, you  
12 would have that same thing. In the Gaia, you would have detail,  
13 which is very important, but you would have no color. You'd have  
14 to look at it for a little bit longer. So some compromise -- if I  
15 was designing this stuff, I'd be looking for some compromise.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Chelton is just old technology. It's just not there yet.

18 Q. Okay. Yeah.

19 MR. BANNING: I think, Bill, that at that point, and Lou,  
20 that I am going not turn to Bill for any follow-up questions about  
21 what we've asked, and then to go into some of the human  
22 performance.

23 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay, great.

24 MR. BANNING: Thank you.

25 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

1 Q. How are you doing? Do you need a break, or are you good?

2 A. No. I'm good.

3 Q. Okay. So I have just a couple of follow-ups on what Brice  
4 had to say, before I get into sort of some other standard  
5 questions. The altimeter setting, do you recall if you set the  
6 altimeter in the Chelton before departing Rudyard Bay?

7 A. I would say, 90 percent of the time, for me, no. And here's  
8 why. I don't even know what the altimeter setting was. And the  
9 reason is, when I'm sitting at sea level, it's the only place I've  
10 ever operated where you don't need the altimeter setting. You set  
11 sea level on the needles. And then it operates normally.

12 And then the Chelton, if it doesn't come up, mimicking that,  
13 then I could put the Chelton to match the altimetry of the round  
14 dials. But it's not something -- I don't use the Chelton for  
15 primary flight information, so it's not something I put a lot of  
16 concern in. My altitude awareness is based on the needle position  
17 of a round dial, not a digital box on the Chelton.

18 Q. Okay. When you said you saw the white and red flash, do you  
19 recall which side of the airplane that was on?

20 A. On my side. It was my left side.

21 Q. Okay. With respect to the reporting point at Mahoney Lake,  
22 is that a mandatory reporting point?

23 A. No. The point I pick is arbitrary, but it's a well-known  
24 geographic reference that anybody else around here would know very  
25 quickly where I was. So for me, it would have been George Inlet

1 for Upper Mahoney, or if I thought there was somebody nearby, real  
2 nearby, it would have been Lower Mahoney for Upper Mahoney at 3.5.  
3 That would tell them how high, what my direction was, and where to  
4 look.

5 Q. Okay. On the passenger use of restraints, just to confirm,  
6 as far as you know, were the passengers all buckled into their  
7 seatbelts when you departed Rudyard?

8 A. They absolutely were all buckled in when we departed Rudyard.

9 Q. Okay. And did anyone remove their seatbelt prior to the  
10 accident?

11 A. I'm not aware of anybody. I have talked to passengers at the  
12 hospital, and one lady told me that -- I'd been told by more than  
13 one person in the hospital, the left rear door separated during  
14 the initial, the first impact. I've been told by more than one  
15 person in the hospital that the passenger sitting closest to the  
16 door was concerned about being pulled out, and that the passengers  
17 around him were also concerned for him, and that at least one  
18 person was holding on to him, but that his seatbelt was doing its  
19 job in keeping him in.

20 And I remember one lady telling me, in the hospital, that she  
21 contemplated undoing her seatbelt to restrain that person, but was  
22 concerned that it wouldn't be good for her future health if she  
23 undid her seatbelt to help him, so she did not do so.

24 And I had one other lady in the hospital tell me she  
25 contemplated undoing her seatbelt to get her life vest down, but

1 that she decided to leave her seatbelt on, because she thought it  
2 was more important. That statement puzzled me, because there  
3 is -- you don't need to undo your seatbelt to get the life  
4 preserver. It's right above your head.

5 So the shorter answer is, I'm not aware of anybody who undid  
6 their seatbelt before the impact.

7 Q. Okay. How many life vests were on the airplane?

8 A. There would have been one at every seat. There were 10  
9 seats, plus mine.

10 Q. Okay. And did you wear your restraints, your seatbelt,  
11 shoulder harness throughout the flight?

12 A. Absolutely.

13 Q. What kind was yours? Was it a --

14 A. Mine was a single shoulder harness, that clipped into the  
15 buckle, so the buckle would be at my right hip. And the shoulder  
16 harness was started up -- was an inertial reel, from the upper  
17 left, down to my lower right.

18 Q. Okay. And the passenger seat belts, are they lift latches or  
19 something else?

20 A. Lift latches, no shoulder harness.

21 Q. Okay. You mentioned one lady might have retrieved and  
22 possibly donned a life vest. Did -- do you have any idea how well  
23 that worked to keep her afloat?

24 A. All I can tell you is I have a vague recollection of maybe  
25 seeing a lady with a life vest making her way to the beach. I

1 can't tell you if it was inflated. Presumably, it was inflated,  
2 but that's as much information I can give you. I know that one  
3 came out of the airplane. I saw it on the beach. That's it.

4 Q. Okay. What's the brand and model of your vest that you were  
5 wearing?

6 A. It's a green, an olive-drab green marine type vest. I don't  
7 remember the name.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I don't know if it's Mustang. But it has pockets on the  
10 outside that allow me to pack in the survival equipment. It  
11 shouldn't be hard to figure out. There aren't very many of them  
12 out there. And I can show you one here right now, if it's  
13 important to you.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. The chief pilot wears one, I wear one, and some of the new  
16 guys have bought them, so one will show up.

17 Q. Okay. So they're -- those vests are all the same type that  
18 are located here?

19 A. Those are personal items. They are not company-supplied.  
20 They're not part of the airplane.

21 Q. Okay. But if we looked at one of the other ones here it  
22 would be the same type?

23 A. Exactly the same thing that I was wearing.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. With the pilot's own choice of what gear he put in the

1 pockets.

2 Q. Can you tell us, like which pilot would have one that looks  
3 just like yours, so we make sure that we look at the right one?

4 A. Clark Hassel.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. The military gives you a survival vest that you wear under  
7 your parachute. And at the time I was in the military, in the  
8 '80s, the vest that I had, had a lot of pockets. Between that and  
9 my G-suit, I had enough gear to go anywhere and survive. I  
10 wore -- the vest that I wore was surplus when I left the  
11 military, and I don't know if they gave me an old one or whatever  
12 it was, but I had the identical vest that I wore in the military,  
13 and my whole floatplane career, and all of my Super Cub time, off-  
14 airport stuff, I've always worn that vest. All of that stuff went  
15 into this vest.

16 Q. Okay. For the rescuers, can you just briefly outline again  
17 what the order of people that arrived was? Just best you can  
18 recall.

19 A. Well, the first informal responder was the gentleman in the  
20 Avon raft, who had the presence of mind to have a radio, a hand-  
21 held radio. The next response was a single individual in a, you  
22 know, something like a 16-foot skiff. The next boat would have  
23 been -- the next boat/vehicle would have been the George Inlet  
24 boat. And thereafter, probably thereafter, it was probably one of  
25 our Beavers. And shortly after that, there were boats and

1 helicopters in no specific order. Temsco showed up with an AStar  
2 and a Hughes 500 shortly around the same time as -- at that point,  
3 I'd be speculating, so I don't really know, but that's about the  
4 only thing I can remember.

5 Q. Okay. Okay. All right. With that, I'd like to transition a  
6 little bit to just collecting 72-hour history data. So your work  
7 schedule in the 72 hours, let's say the day of the accident and 2  
8 days prior, can you describe those work shifts, the timing of  
9 those work shifts?

10 A. I would be trying to remember something that I can more  
11 easily give you exact information by looking at our schedule  
12 sheets.

13 Q. Okay. As far as you can recall --

14 A. As far as I can recall, it was something on the order of  
15 three to five of those Misty tours in the 2 days prior to this  
16 one. I don't recall if I had a mail run in there. I did mail  
17 runs too, but I don't recall whether they occurred within the 72  
18 hours prior.

19 Q. And the day of, do you recall the time, roughly, that you  
20 started working that day?

21 A. Again, that's something I can tell you to the minute, but my  
22 recollection would be probably 6:30, 6 to 6:30, somewhere in  
23 there.

24 Q. Okay. And so if we do obtain those scheduling records,  
25 they'll be an accurate reflection of this --

1 A. They will.

2 Q. They match the actual -- okay.

3 A. Yes. The only thing that would be different is that the  
4 sign-in log that we all put, when you sign in, it's not to the  
5 minute. You know, it's probably 15 minutes. If I get here at  
6 6:45, I might put -- 6:30, I might 6:45, I don't know. But the  
7 flying times, the flying schedule is to the minute, because when  
8 you depart the dock, you make a radio call, they record that.  
9 When you arrive, or when you make your position report on the way  
10 out, they say where and the time.

11 On the way back, when you call them again, they have a time  
12 and a location. And then when you get back to the dock, that  
13 you're back, they record the exact minute.

14 Q. Okay. All right. Were those 3 days, the 2 days prior and  
15 the day of, were they primarily taken up with work activities, or  
16 did you have days off?

17 A. No. It was 100 percent work.

18 Q. Okay. Okay. So on the day of the accident, can we start  
19 with what time you think you might have awoken, and sort of  
20 roughly if we can sketch out when your flights were. We'll go  
21 back and confirm with the records, but just so we have an idea of  
22 how your day went.

23 A. I get up at 5 o'clock, with an alarm clock, because that  
24 alarm clock goes off at 5 o'clock every day. Sometimes I wake up  
25 before or after, just because that's my own internal body clock.



1 I usually am in bed by 9. And I'm at that age where I don't  
2 always sleep well, but there's generally adequate time to sleep  
3 well. I was well rested during that 72 hours.

4 After I get up, I take a shower. I make a couple of eggs,  
5 and drink a lot of water, one cup of coffee. Check the weather,  
6 the aviation weather. Check the tides, check the height of the  
7 tides, again trying to evaluate -- it's all part of that, what are  
8 you going to do if. But if I check the tides and I know what  
9 they're going to do, when they're going to do, that's going to  
10 have a bearing on how I operate if I'm delivering mail.

11 There's certain places where there are rocks and other  
12 hazards that are going to be more exposed at a low tide. The dock  
13 out at Rudyard, when the tidal flow is high, it can affect how you  
14 dock, so it's just preparation.

15 Then I'm also looking at what the trend for the weather of  
16 the day, the next few days is going to be, because that's -- I'm  
17 painting a mental picture, what am I going to be dealing with when  
18 I go out wherever it is I'm going, whether it's a clear blue day,  
19 what the winds aloft are going to be.

20 Then I get dressed and come to work. So I'm usually -- you  
21 know, it's a 15-minute walk, maybe a 10-minute drive to get here.  
22 And I'm usually here at 6 or a few minutes afterwards. They --  
23 I'm here early for a couple of reasons, either to be ready for the  
24 first flight that I'm going to be making. More importantly, it's  
25 probably for getting the airplane that I was flying, the Otter,

1 which is a bigger airplane, out of the way, and getting it fueled,  
2 and then getting ready, so that everything is done ahead of time,  
3 so whenever that next flight is, it's already ready to go.

4 I'd have to refer to the schedule to tell you what my day was  
5 after that.

6 Q. Okay. So, to the best of your recollection, the day of the  
7 accident, you woke at 5?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And the night before, to the best of your recollection, what  
10 time did you go to sleep?

11 A. I was probably in bed around 9. And I'm generally asleep  
12 within seconds of the time I go to sleep -- I put my head down.

13 Q. Okay. And quality of your sleep that night?

14 A. I'd be guessing, but I would -- I don't recall there being  
15 any issues, so I would say it was probably fine. Again, I have to  
16 put an age time on that. There was a time when I felt like I got  
17 a hard night's sleep all night long. Those days are behind me,  
18 but I felt adequately rested.

19 Q. Okay. All right. So, that was the night of Sunday, May 12th  
20 through Monday, May 13th. And I believe you said you felt alert  
21 during the accident flight; is that correct?

22 A. Very alert.

23 Q. Okay. Okay. So the two nights prior to Sunday night, May  
24 12th were Saturday night, May 11th, and Friday night, May 10th. I  
25 know this is a bit of heavy lift, given the time that's elapsed

1 and so forth, but can you estimate for me when you likely went to  
2 sleep and woke?

3 A. Yes. To the average person on a 5-day work week, those are a  
4 weekend. But here we operate 7 days a week. And as a career  
5 pilot, a day of the week is something you see on a calendar.  
6 Those were just normal days for me. The day of the week, I'm not  
7 even aware of. Friday and Saturday night that you speak of,  
8 they're Friday and Saturday night because you say they're Friday  
9 and Saturday night.

10 They happen to be my anniversary and Mother's Day, so I'm  
11 aware of what the dates were. But if they didn't have holiday  
12 attachments to them, I wouldn't even know what days those were.  
13 But it was important for me, it was flying the next day, to get 8  
14 hours in the rack. So I would have gone to bed at the same 9  
15 o'clock and would have gotten up at 5 o'clock. And that's -- I  
16 don't remember doing anything different than that.

17 Q. Okay. How much sleep per night do you need to feel rested  
18 when you're not working?

19 A. If I get 8 hours, that's more than adequate. I do not sleep  
20 in. My body wouldn't let me sleep in. If I go to bed late, I'm  
21 still going to get up at the same time. If I get 6 hours, that's  
22 more than I need -- that's adequate for my needs. My target is 8.  
23 If I got less than 6, then the next night is dedicated to  
24 recovering for what I missed the night before. But if I get 6, I  
25 don't feel like I need to do that the next night.

1 Q. Any sleep disorders you're aware of?

2 A. None that I'm aware of. That's been a discussion in our  
3 family. My wife wears a CPAP, as of just recently. And she's  
4 been through the evaluation process. I get a first-class medical  
5 every 6 months, and that's a question I'm asked, of course, every  
6 time I get a medical.

7 And therefore I asked my wife, I said, do you see anything  
8 that leads you to believe I have sleep apnea or anything that  
9 looks like I'm waking startled with a big breath, or that I don't  
10 get adequate sleep. And her response has pretty much always been  
11 the same. Other than the snoring that I do on occasion, and other  
12 than the tossing and turning that I do sometimes, she doesn't have  
13 any reason to believe that I suffer from any kind of a sleep  
14 disorder.

15 Q. Okay. What are your normal days off?

16 A. We're at the beginning of the season. There has been no hard  
17 schedule set where there's a rotation where you can anticipate  
18 what days you're going to have off. This place has a schedule  
19 that probably goes 10 days in advance, and you're on there or  
20 you're not. You can see what days you have what days you do not  
21 have.

22 The accident day was day 3 of a 5-day stretch, on the posted  
23 schedule. Because I was new in this Otter, they were trying to  
24 give me some continuity, and I was getting the benefit of more  
25 time on the schedule than I would have been if I was just flying

1 the Beaver. But I can't tell you what days I did have off or what  
2 I would have off after that.

3 As far as the way this place operates, once the tour season  
4 hits and we're doing a lot of tours, then you generally get, at a  
5 minimum, 2 days off in a 7-day stretch, if not 3. At no time have  
6 I ever felt, in the 2 years that I -- two seasons that I've been  
7 here where I -- that I was overscheduled or overworked. But there  
8 have been plenty of days that I felt like I was under-utilized.

9 I guess my point there is that it was good. There was  
10 nothing exhausting or fatiguing about what we do here. I don't  
11 know if I could say that if I was in really bad shape, but for me  
12 it hasn't been an issue.

13 Q. Okay. Have you been involved in any previous aviation  
14 accidents or incidents?

15 A. Yes, I have.

16 Q. Can you describe?

17 A. In 2001, I was in a Aviat Husky that I landed in a snow field  
18 adjacent to our farm, and it flipped over on its back. I can give  
19 you more detail if you want as to the whys and hows, but the end  
20 result was, I was the only operator in the airplane. The FAA  
21 investigated it and found no reason to sanction the pilot or go  
22 any farther. There wasn't an oral, there was not a review ride,  
23 and I was asked to do some work for them after that, as a result,  
24 so they didn't feel any -- like there was a problem.

25 Q. In a sentence or two, what was the reason for the accident?

1 A. I got to give you a little bit of background then. The farm  
2 we live on, our animals are at the back of the property, and  
3 that's 800 or 900 feet behind the house. So you trudge through  
4 the snow to get to where the animals are, and you trudge through  
5 the snow back. That gave me a pretty good indication of what the  
6 snow conditions were.

7 The farm adjacent to ours -- it actually wasn't -- we weren't  
8 sharing a fence line. It was one farm between us, so it was a  
9 half mile away, is the field that I landed on, and the reason I  
10 went there is because it had a longer field. But any time I land  
11 off airport, I have to check out the landing surface first. And  
12 in this case, I was on big tires.

13 That season's not good enough for us to operate on skis,  
14 because you have to go to pavement at some point. I have  
15 experience on skis. Generally, 6 inches of dry snow is not a  
16 problem on wheels. Above 6 inches, then you'd better start  
17 watching.

18 I didn't have 6 inches there. It was less than that. I  
19 didn't think it'd be a problem. But I did a precautionary  
20 approach to check it out. And that is to go down and touch one  
21 wheel, gently, at a higher speed than I need, so that if I don't  
22 like what I have, I can pull it off the snow, or whatever the  
23 surface is, and come back around and either check it out again or  
24 decide that's good enough.

25 In this case, I went down and touch wheel, one wheel down,

1 and the snow, where I was, was different than the snow at my  
2 house. There was a crust. This is January. The crust is a  
3 springtime thing, typically. And when my wheel, right tire hit  
4 that crust, when it broke through, then there was a tremendous  
5 amount of drag there. And when it did, it's like it grabbed that  
6 wheel.

7 And when it did that, it grabbed the other -- it yawed the  
8 airplane enough that the other wheel hit, too. And when that  
9 wheel hit, it did the same thing. And at that point, I was along  
10 for the ride. So it was a slow-motion nose-over onto its back.

11 Q. Have you ever been disciplined for your performance as a  
12 pilot?

13 A. Never.

14 Q. Have you ever received commendations for your performance as  
15 a pilot? Or awards.

16 A. The military gives those out like they give out candy bars at  
17 Halloween. So I got the same thing everybody else got. But I've  
18 never been given anything that everybody else didn't get. I've  
19 never been in the position where I had to perform any different  
20 than anybody else. They -- you know, just your normal job.

21 Q. Have you had any recent, like last 12 months, non-aviation  
22 accidents or injuries?

23 A. In the 12 months prior to this, no accidents, two surgeries.

24 Q. What was the nature of the surgeries?

25 A. One was a arthroscope of the right knee, to clear out a

1 meniscus that was torn last year. And that went fine. It's  
2 almost completely healed. I'm certainly functional with that knee  
3 100 percent. And the other was a prostate surgery that was  
4 probably the beginning of November, but honestly I'd have to check  
5 dates, you know, because that one doesn't have any symptoms that I  
6 would keep track of. And in fact, I'm in better shape as a result  
7 of that than I was prior to that.

8 Q. Did either of those issues bother you during the accident  
9 flight?

10 A. No.

11 Q. All right. Other than -- approximately when was the knee  
12 surgery?

13 A. I injured it last summer, and I wanted as much time as I  
14 could to recuperate, so I was very aggressive about trying to get  
15 it done ASAP on the -- back there. I got back there on the 3rd of  
16 October, and I think it took me almost a month before I actually  
17 went under the knife, but I don't know the date. I can get the  
18 date, but I don't know the date.

19 Q. It was -- is it fair to say approximately November of 2018?

20 A. For the knee? I think you could approximate end of October.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. With the prostate surgery shortly thereafter, but I don't  
23 know how long it was before that -- or after that.

24 Q. Okay. Aside from the surgeries, any significant changes in  
25 your health, good or bad, in the last year?



1 A. No.

2 Q. Financial situation, any significant changes in the last  
3 year?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Any significant changes in your personal life, separation,  
6 divorce, birth, death, changes in the health of immediate family?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Generally, like briefly, how would you describe your  
9 health?

10 A. Not as good as it has been. I'm in a position where I'm  
11 working to get in better shape. I have typically lived a life  
12 of -- a very active life, and in good shape. I've been an  
13 endurance athlete my whole life, both running and swimming. But  
14 age and overuse during those things have resulted in injuries that  
15 prevent me from doing that. That has resulted in me not being in  
16 as good a shape as I would like to be.

17 And then the recovery of, from those surgeries prevented me  
18 from doing a lot of active work, and things that I would like to  
19 have been doing. But at the very least, when I was able, I would  
20 take long walks, I would lift or do aerobics every day.

21 Q. Okay. Is there a personal doctor who's over -- was  
22 overseeing, in general, sort of, the various surgeries and so  
23 forth?

24 A. No. Our personal doctor retired, and after that, we've just  
25 been seeing specialists as we needed. Last year, we got our first

1 primary care physician, who is about 14 years old, and doesn't  
2 know us very well. I mean, he's a great guy, and probably very  
3 competent, but we don't have a long history with him. And those  
4 two surgeries, he was not part of.

5 And the two doctors that I used for the surgeries, the  
6 orthopedic surgeon was not anybody -- normally -- I felt like I  
7 was in a subscription service with the orthopedic surgeon that I  
8 normally use, because I've had a lot of surgeries. But he was not  
9 available, so I used a different one.

10 The prostate surgery was with a physician I've had for a long  
11 time. And I generally bounced stuff off him as well as my AME for  
12 anything medically related.

13 Q. Okay. How's your vision?

14 A. I wear corrective glasses. I'm wearing contacts right now,  
15 the same kind, the same type of daily contacts I was wearing  
16 during the accident. I wear readers when I need them, but  
17 everything we're doing right now, I don't need them.

18 Q. Okay. And color vision normal?

19 A. Normal.

20 Q. Do you happen to recall your -- like in general, is your  
21 correction strong or light?

22 A. I haven't a clue.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But I can tell you that my contacts, the numbers that I see  
25 every morning is a plus 2.0 in my right eye and a plus 1.5 in my

1 left.

2 Q. Plus 2 in right and what was the other one?

3 A. Plus 1.5.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And I will tell you that when dealing with the eye doctor,  
6 that I've put my focus on distance vision, that -- to see  
7 airplanes. So if there is a flaw in the correction, it would be  
8 close vision, and not far. So as far as my corrective vision at  
9 the time of the accident, it would have been fine. It would not  
10 have been any problems with the corrective vision.

11 Q. Okay. And did you have any trouble seeing the Chelton  
12 display?

13 A. No.

14 Q. As far as, you know --

15 A. No.

16 Q. -- acuity?

17 A. No.

18 Q. All right. And is your hearing normal?

19 A. For somebody who's 60 years old who's been around guns and  
20 airplanes, I would say probably normal, but there is deterioration  
21 in my left ear at high frequencies.

22 Q. Do you have more difficulty than other pilots you've flown  
23 with hearing radio transmissions?

24 A. No. But you need to understand, we're operating a system  
25 that has a volume control, and I was wearing noise-cancelling

1 headsets. So I had absolutely no difficulty. But there were  
2 times when I turned the volume up on certain things that I have to  
3 listen to. The music that the people in back are listening to, I  
4 keep that turned very low, so that I can hear the airplane and  
5 everything else, turn the radios loud enough so that they're  
6 clear.

7 Q. Okay. Are you taking any prescription medication?

8 A. Only one, and that's Flomax, tamsulosin, point 4. And that's  
9 prior to the accident. After the accident, I'm taking a few more  
10 things, but nothing of them -- they're not strong or antibiotics.

11 Q. Okay. All right. Oh, yes. We might need a quick break,  
12 because we had another interviewee scheduled at another location  
13 and we need to contact somebody to go talk to that person.

14 MR. BANNING: Okay.

15 MR. BECK: That's fine.

16 MR. BANNING: Take a short break?

17 DR. BRAMBLE: Yeah. If that'd be all right. Thanks so much,  
18 guys.

19 MR. BECK: Kevin, did you say you have to leave at 1?

20 MR. ROOF: Yeah. I was going to go (indiscernible).

21 MR. BANNING: We might be able to finish up by then.

22 MR. ROOF: Okay.

23 (Off the record.)

24 (On the record.)

25 MR. BANNING: And we are back on the record at 12:30, and

1 Michelle has departed the group.

2 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

3 Q. Okay. A couple more standard health questions, and then  
4 we'll be moving to other stuff. Do you drink alcohol, and if so,  
5 what was the last use prior to the accident?

6 A. I do, primarily beer and wine, nothing hard, except the rare  
7 exception. In the 72 hours, I can't tell you for sure, but  
8 there's a possibility I had one beer each night. But it would  
9 have been probably 2 hours before I went to sleep, and that's it.

10 Q. Was that at a restaurant or at home?

11 A. No. It would have been with friends, not at a restaurant or  
12 anything like that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I don't think I had one the night before the accident.

15 Q. Okay. Okay, and tobacco? Do you use tobacco?

16 A. Not anymore. I chewed tobacco for a lot of years, but I  
17 haven't --

18 Q. Okay. And in the 72 hours before the accident, did you take  
19 any medication, either prescription or nonprescription, that might  
20 have affected your performance?

21 A. No.

22 Q. All right. Just prior to the accident, did anything hinder  
23 your view outside the cockpit?

24 A. No.

25 Q. And were there any distractions from passengers in the

1 minutes prior to the accident?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. They don't have the ability to speak back. They can hear,  
5 but they cannot speak.

6 Q. How do you like working for Taquan?

7 A. It's a very friendly environment. It's a very positive  
8 environment, and it's a very supportive environment. Like any  
9 organization, there are some things that I'd like to see  
10 different, but none of them affect my performance as a pilot.

11 Q. Were you feeling any external pressures from the company  
12 during the accident flight?

13 A. This company does not put any -- and I'm not a company  
14 mouthpiece, but this company doesn't put any pressure on you to  
15 fly. That is different than other companies on this waterfront.  
16 This one does just the opposite. They're very supportive about a  
17 conservative approach.

18 Q. Okay. Were you feeling any external pressures from your  
19 personal life during the accident flight?

20 A. No.

21 Q. What was your mood like before the accident?

22 A. Very good, very happy. They were nice people, and they were  
23 getting along great.

24 Q. Were you familiar with the other pilot who was involved in  
25 the accident?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How did you know him?

3 A. Just in the course of 2 years, operating the same time, you  
4 see the same people, and you bump into them a lot. I never drank  
5 any beer with him, but we shook hands. I certainly knew who he  
6 was. He may have known who I was, by face, but I -- you know, by  
7 name, but I'd spoken to him. We'd shook hands and visited a week  
8 prior.

9 Q. When you say you visited, can you describe that in more  
10 detail?

11 A. The other Otter pilot here, Brentwood Wiest and I went down  
12 and just visited in the afternoon with some of the other  
13 operators, to include him. We didn't visit very long with him.  
14 We spent more time talking to his dad than him, but we talked to  
15 him for a minute, and then that was it. He and Brentwood are old  
16 friends. I was kind of a tagalong.

17 Q. Okay. So, you mentioned that you might have some ideas about  
18 safety improvements that could be made for operations in this  
19 area, that could be relevant to the accident. Would you like to  
20 elaborate?

21 A. I have three. ADS-B will prevent accidents. An airplane  
22 that I cannot hear, but can see, is one way to prevent an  
23 accident. Radios alone are not going to prevent the accident,  
24 unless you're very specific. I think the ADS-B, or lack thereof  
25 is a major part of the reason there was a midair collision here.

1       I can't say for sure, but I believe that the airplane that I  
2 collided with did not have -- did not show up on my ADS-B. I  
3 believe in my heart that if he had made a radio call, I would have  
4 heard it, and would have been looking for him. Absent both of  
5 those, the only way I could have avoided him was to see and avoid.  
6 And in an airplane with somewhat restricted visibility, you're not  
7 always going to see somebody. And that's why the ADS-B would have  
8 helped.

9       Recommendation number 2 and 3 are both equipment in the  
10 airplane. The passengers were unable to get their life vests on,  
11 or even out of the airplane. When they're under stress in a  
12 rapidly sinking airplane, I can't expect them to pull the life  
13 vests off the wall and get them on, even if they're motivated to  
14 do so. I knew where they were. I knew how to get them off, and I  
15 couldn't get them off the wall because they were slippery with jet  
16 fuel. And as a result we almost lost at least one person, who  
17 didn't have a vest.

18       Recommendation number 3 is that what I went through this time  
19 just further confirms my own feeling -- and I'm not speaking for  
20 anybody else. My own feeling is that you get out of the airplane  
21 with what you have on your back. I had a vest with survival gear  
22 and flotation. I wasn't going to get it out of the cockpit where  
23 I was sitting. And I wasn't able to get anything out of the  
24 airplane before the airplane sank.

25       If this was -- if I was a king, nobody would get in a



1 floatplane without a vest on. And the pilot wouldn't get in the  
2 airplane without some survival gear to help take care of other  
3 people.

4 If you can't spend the night here -- in Ketchikan, you guys,  
5 in junior high they take all the kids out to an island and they,  
6 you get to take out there what you can put in a coffee can. They  
7 make them spend the night. And those kids learn a lot. And they  
8 don't have many -- they don't have very many kids get lost or  
9 unable to deal with themselves.

10 The passengers we're carrying are cruise ship passengers.  
11 They don't have anything and they're not dressed for it. So  
12 it's -- my vest was no longer set up for a solo operator. It was  
13 set up for how to deal with 8 or 10 people on a beach. And I had  
14 that stuff in that vest.

15 It wasn't -- most of that stuff wasn't needed, but the  
16 inReach beacon that was on my vest, I still think that's  
17 important. And I think a pilot with a vest like that, that had  
18 one in place would be another way and a more positive way to  
19 ensure a quick recovery, if that would be part of the vest.

20 Those are the only recommendations I have. You may ask  
21 whether we should stop allowing people to fly where the collision  
22 occurred. I would not recommend that. There wasn't anything --  
23 if you stopped allowing people to fly where we flew then you'd  
24 have to stop allowing people to fly where we go on tours. That  
25 was just part of it. We just need to continue doing what we're

1 doing to prevent accidents. That's it.

2 Q. Did your survival vest help you assist the injured passenger?

3 A. With the exception of the inReach beacon that was shattered,  
4 and a Leatherman knife that I carried in my belt, which I used a  
5 lot during, taking care of these people, cutting off watch bands  
6 and things like that as things were starting to swell, cutting  
7 clothes off when they were trying to do IVs, lending the -- you  
8 know, whatever, I didn't need to use the other stuff that was in  
9 my vest.

10 Q. What about the flotation?

11 A. In my own vest?

12 Q. Did it assist you with rescuing anyone?

13 A. I would say yes. I don't -- I was fortunate in that I'm a  
14 good swimmer, a lot of experience doing it. I didn't need it.  
15 But in cold water, somebody who was not a good swimmer might have  
16 relied more on that vest, on that flotation. I used it because I  
17 had it. I don't know if it altered the outcome at all. At the  
18 time I popped it, I didn't feel like I was starting to sink or  
19 anything.

20 But we were close enough to swim. If I was out in the inlet,  
21 and hyperthermia was a factor, it would have been absolutely  
22 necessary for every person there to have flotation.

23 Q. All right. Thanks very much.

24 MR. BANNING: Todd?

25 MR. GENTRY: I don't have anything. Thank you for your time,

1    though.  I do appreciate it.

2           MR. BANNING:  Kevin?

3           MR. ROOF:  Could we just go off the record for one quick  
4 second, and let me ask --

5           (Off the record.)

6           (Off the record.)

7           MR. BANNING:  And we are back on the record at 12:44.

8           BY DR. BRAMBLE:

9   Q.    Okay.  So just continuing, Mr. Beck, can you please describe  
10 any injuries that you suffered during the accident, and any  
11 effects that you might be experiencing now?

12  A.    I have a cut on my head.  I've got swelling around the face.  
13 I've been told I have a concussion.  I'm still experiencing some  
14 dizziness or confusion when I stand up too quick, or I set  
15 something down.  I meant to do it, and I don't remember undoing  
16 things.  That's not like me.  But that's pretty much it.  There's  
17 a little fuzziness.

18           The recollections I've given you, I believe are accurate.  
19 And over -- since the accident, none of my recollection has  
20 changed.  Nothing's been added.  But I've been told by the medical  
21 professionals that as the days go, that more things will come to  
22 light, that I'll start to remember more things.  And I think  
23 that's important for what you're hearing right now.  If I come  
24 back to you in a week and you were to ask me some questions and I  
25 added something and you said, that's different than what you said,

1 or you didn't bring that up last time, I think it's important to  
2 at least have on the record that there may be a reason for that,  
3 that's medical and not an intentional change in the story or  
4 fabrication.

5 The rest of the injuries are, you know, just normal stuff,  
6 lower back and some other things, aches and pains and bruises.

7 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay, Brice, I'm going to give you another  
8 opportunity to ask questions.

9 BY MR. BANNING:

10 Q. Is there -- I think I only have one question. Is there  
11 anything that you think that we missed that's important that we  
12 should know about?

13 A. In the quest of preventing this from happening again, I  
14 would -- well, I pretty much already said it. There are some  
15 things that I would add for some other operations that we do, but  
16 that's pretty much for this accident. That's what I would add.  
17 But I'm going to say it anyway.

18 We deliver mail in other parts of the islands where the  
19 weather's not good to see the horizon. What we're using right now  
20 to deconflict with the terrain is not adequate.

21 Q. And you're referring to the Chelton?

22 A. I am.

23 Q. Okay.

24 MR. BANNING: And that was my only question, Bill. Thank  
25 you.

1 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. Yes. I --

2 MR. BECK: Understand, that's a personal opinion only.

3 DR. BRAMBLE: Uh-huh, sure. I don't have any other specific  
4 questions. I'll just ask maybe one more close out that's sort of  
5 generic, but I want to give these guys one more opportunity.

6 Todd, do you have anything?

7 BY MR. GENTRY:

8 Q. Was your iPhone on ForeFlight at the time of the incident?

9 A. It was in the background. Music was on the forefront.

10 Q. So the music was up instead? Okay.

11 A. Even if the ForeFlight was on, it wouldn't have had any  
12 bearing, because I wouldn't -- wasn't using it.

13 Q. Understand. And you don't use any kind of a ADS-B load into  
14 the ForeFlight display?

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. You do not use that?

17 A. I do not use that.

18 Q. Right, okay. That was my only question.

19 MR. BECK: You guys, it's very important for my conscience to  
20 know whether the other airplane had ADS-B. I know that you're  
21 going to ask.

22 MR. BANNING: We're still in the process of figuring that  
23 out.

24 MR. BECK: That's the one question I have.

25 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

1 Q. One other thing, actually, that just occurred to me is the --  
2 the iPhone, where was it attached?

3 A. I have it attached with a suction cup on the lower right  
4 forward windshield in front of me, with about a 6-inch flexible,  
5 and it's placed below the glare shield, where it's not in the way  
6 of anything, but that I have quick access to it. But it's in my  
7 field of view. I don't have to look down for it. It's not  
8 sitting in my lap or anything else. It's where it should be.

9 Q. Okay, so that was kind of quick. I just want to make sure I  
10 got it correct. So you had it suction-cup lower right windshield  
11 in front of you with 6-inch flexible below -- did you say below  
12 glare shield?

13 A. Yes, I did. So that 6-inch -- this glare shield only sticks  
14 about that far in the Otter that I was flying. So that suction  
15 cup in the lower right allowed me to snake that flexible  
16 attachment to mount the phone below the glare shield --

17 Q. Oh, I think I see what you mean.

18 A. -- and not in the way of anything important.

19 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. I think we've about covered the close-  
20 out questions, actually. So with that, I think we'll just call  
21 the interview concluded. Thanks very much.

22 MR. BECK: My assumption is that you guys reserve the right,  
23 until the investigation is complete, to call me back to answer or  
24 straighten out any confusion?

25 DR. BRAMBLE: Let's go ahead and stop the recording.

1 MR. BANNING: We're going to go off the record at 12:50.

2 (Off the record.)

3 (On the record.)

4 MR. BANNING: Okay, we are back on the record at 12:56 p.m.

5 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

6 Q. Okay, Mr. Beck, we just wanted to ask you one more question,  
7 which is, did your inflatable survival vest work as you expected  
8 when you inflated it in the water?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And how do you know that?

11 A. Because I've worn it for 2 years, and have never needed to  
12 inflate it. And when I needed it, I pulled the red handle, and it  
13 inflated via CO2 immediately.

14 Q. And did it provide sufficient flotation that if you could not  
15 swim it would have kept you afloat?

16 A. I can't answer that.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I can tell you that combined with swimming, that we stayed  
19 afloat. If I wasn't swimming, I don't know if it would have made  
20 it. But I --

21 Q. Because there were certain --

22 A. I presume, but I cannot tell you whether it was a positive or  
23 a negative.

24 DR. BRAMBLE: Thanks very much.

25 MR. BANNING: And we are off the record at 12:57.

1 (Off the record.)

2 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded at 12:57 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MID-AIR  
                                  COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN  
                                  KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019  
                                  Interview of Louis Beck

ACCIDENT NO.:               CEN19MA141

PLACE:

DATE:                        May 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the transcriber.

Pamela C. Jacobson  
Transcriber

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MIDAIR

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COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN

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KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019

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Interview of: LOUIS BECK

Pilot

Via Telephone

Wednesday,

September 18, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

D. BRICE BANNING, Senior Aviation Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

CLINT JOHNSON, Chief, Anchorage Office  
National Transportation Safety Board

KEVIN ROOF, Director of Operations  
Taquan Air

BOB RICHMOND, Attorney  
(On behalf of Louis Beck)

I N D E X

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:06 a.m.)

MR. BANNING: My name's Brice Banning. I'm the Ops Group Chairman with the National Transportation Safety Board for an accident involving a Taquan Otter and a de Havilland Beaver, Accident No. CEN19MA141.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the Department of Transportation or FAA. It has no regulatory or enforcement powers.

I'd like to introduce the group members. This is a telephonic interview, and we have Clint Johnson on the line; myself, Brice Banning; Kevin Roof, Lou Beck and Bob Richmond.

Today we'll be using the services of a digital recorder. The recording will be sent out for transcription, and the transcript will be made part of the public docket.

The purpose of the investigation is safety, to determine probable cause and prevent recurrence. Our role is not to assign fault, blame or liability. This interview is part of the fact-finding phase of the investigation. We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity.

Each of the group members will have a chance to ask questions. We will ask questions one at a time, and everyone has been instructed to not interrupt the person who is asking

1 questions at the time. There will be the opportunity for each  
2 group member to ask follow-up questions after each person has had  
3 a turn.

4 Please answer all questions to the best of your recollection.  
5 If you do not understand a question, Lou, just ask it to be  
6 repeated or explained, and if you misstated or need to clarify  
7 something, please do so.

8 You are entitled to have one representative of your choosing.  
9 Is there someone you would like to have as your representative,  
10 Lou?

11 MR. BECK: Yes, Bob Richmond is my representative.

12 MR. BANNING: Thank you. Is there any questions before we  
13 get started and does anybody have any objection to the interview  
14 being recorded? If we can go around the phone, if you will, and  
15 have everybody say their name and then whether there is any  
16 objection to the recording, I would grateful.

17 Lou, would you --

18 MR. JOHNSON: I'll start off there, Brice. This is --

19 MR. BANNING: Okay. Go ahead, Clint.

20 MR. JOHNSON: I'm sorry.

21 MR. BANNING: Nope, go ahead, Clint. Thank you.

22 MR. JOHNSON: Clint Johnson, Chief of the NTSB Office in  
23 Anchorage, no objection to being recorded.

24 MR. BANNING: Kevin.

25 MR. ROOF: Kevin Roof, Director of Operations, Taquan Air, no

1 objection.

2 MR. BANNING: Mr. Beck?

3 MR. BECK: Lou Beck, accident pilot, no objections to  
4 recording.

5 MR. BANNING: Thank you.

6 And Mr. Richmond?

7 MR. RICHMOND: No objection.

8 MR. BANNING: Thank you.

9 Okay. And so we'll go ahead and get started with the  
10 questions at this time.

11 INTERVIEW OF LOUIS BECK

12 BY MR. BANNING:

13 Q. And I know we covered some of this in the original interview  
14 when you visited with us in Ketchikan, and I know we talked about  
15 the oral alerts or lack thereof that the Chelton provided. Lou,  
16 are you aware of any visual traffic alerts that the Chelton  
17 provided?

18 A. I'm not aware of any alerts.

19 Q. Okay. And what would you -- do you have any thoughts on what  
20 you would have liked to have been provided in this situation?

21 A. That's an open-ended question. There's a lot of things that  
22 would have been better, but I'm not sure that I can give you a  
23 concise answer on that.

24 Q. Yeah, and I'm sorry. Let me try to rephrase. With regard to  
25 alerts, do you have any thoughts on what you would have liked to

1 have provided in the way of alerts?

2 A. In an ideal world, if an airplane gets within a certain  
3 bubble around my airplane, much like TCAS, it would be nice to  
4 have an alert. There will, however, be times when you're around a  
5 lot of airplanes and a tour in the Misty Fjords is one of those  
6 areas where those alerts would be too numerous. But in a  
7 situation, you're in the wide open space and there's one other  
8 person that might be out there that you're not aware of, TCAS gets  
9 credit for a lot of saves. If ADS-B had the same capability, it  
10 probably would also get credit for saves.

11 Q. Thank you. Do you -- I'd like to move on to the transponder.  
12 Do you recall the position of the transponder for the accident  
13 flight?

14 A. The transponder is not something that we have any control  
15 over in the airplane that I was flying.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It's not something that we -- I think there's a head for the  
18 ADS-B, but I don't think there's a transponder head.

19 Q. Okay. So do you know if there -- and just to clarify, do you  
20 know if there was a transponder in the accident airplane, in the  
21 Otter?

22 A. I do not.

23 Q. Okay. Do you have any understanding or thoughts about if the  
24 airplane was equipped with a transponder, how that would affect  
25 traffic or ADS-B data?



1 A. You're asking me to speculate and I'm not prepared to do  
2 that.

3 Q. Okay. Yeah, no problem. And that really wasn't my intent  
4 to. I was just trying to see if you had any thoughts or  
5 understanding about how a Mode C transponder affected ADS-B or  
6 traffic on an ADS-B display.

7 A. It's my understanding, Brice, and I think you're still asking  
8 the question. My understanding is the transponder transmits to a  
9 ground-based station. If there's no ground-based station, it's  
10 not going to help two airplanes that are not in radar contact.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. ADS-B does that, but I don't know if the transponder alone  
13 does that.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Otherwise, we wouldn't have a need for ADS-B.

16 Q. And did you fly aircraft at Taquan, Lou, not the accident  
17 airplane, but other aircraft that were equipped with transponders?

18 A. Same answer. I don't know if any of the airplanes I flew had  
19 a dedicated transponder head.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I think they had a dedicated ADS-B head, but if there was a  
22 transponder in there, it was probably embedded. It wasn't  
23 anything that we touched.

24 Q. Okay. And do -- okay. I think that answers that question.  
25 And I've been asked, Lou, if you could elaborate on the Chelton

1 displays that were displayed at the time of the accident. Do you  
2 recall the background of the two displays, whether it was a moving  
3 map terrain? Do you recall the configuration?

4 A. Well, I can tell you what I normally operated in. I cannot  
5 tell you 4 months ago what that airplane was set up with.

6 Q. No problem. If you would share with me what you --

7 A. What I normally operated?

8 Q. Yeah, if you would share with me what you normally operate  
9 in.

10 A. There's two screens in the Otter.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. One is flight instruments that doesn't provide any ADS-B  
13 information, and the other is the moving map. The moving map is  
14 always up in my case, and it provides -- it shows some terrain.  
15 It's not very detailed. It also shows water. And it is that  
16 screen that would show you other traffic, other ADS-B traffic, and  
17 depending on what range you have it set in, it will show you as a  
18 clump or as individual airplanes.

19 Q. Okay. And there were two Chelton displays, and I understand  
20 we're not talking about the accident flight, but in normal  
21 procedures, you would have the other display set up as what? Do  
22 you recall?

23 A. Well, I don't want to make it sound like a procedure that if  
24 you don't do it, that you violated something, so I think you would  
25 call it a technique. But I think most people, me included,

1 operate with one of those two screens in electronic flight  
2 instruments, i.e. attitude, altitude, airspeed. And the other  
3 screen is the map, as I just described.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you. Do you recall, Lou, and if not, it's no  
5 problem -- I know it's been 4 months, so it's no problem. But do  
6 you recall the fuel load you would have had for the accident  
7 flight?

8 A. No, I do not.

9 Q. Okay. Thank you. And are you familiar, Lou, with the  
10 Ketchikan Commercial Operators Letter of Agreement?

11 A. There's probably more than one, and if there's only one, I'm  
12 not familiar with it.

13 Q. Okay. Do you recall any training you might have had on an  
14 agreement about procedures and call-in points and things of that  
15 nature that the operators had agreed on? And I'm not trying to --  
16 maybe I'm asking the same question, and if I am, we can move on.  
17 It's no problem.

18 A. The training that we received talked about certain waypoints  
19 in the Misty Fjords that needed to be called.

20 Q. Okay. Okay. And I think that is the extent of my questions,  
21 Lou.

22 MR. BANNING: I'd like to go around the room or the telephone  
23 really quick and see if anybody has any additional follow-up  
24 questions.

25 Kevin, do you have any follow-up questions for Lou?

1 BY MR. ROOF:

2 Q. Well, in regard to your last question, reporting points --  
3 Lou, when you were trained at Taquan, did they teach you any  
4 reporting points in other than the fjords themselves, say en  
5 route?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Could you be a bit more descriptive on that?

8 A. Well, if our routing was strictly going straight to the Misty  
9 Fjord environment from the waterfront, we'd be going around  
10 Mountain Point. We'd be going by the Dog Leg. We'd be going by  
11 Fish Creek. We'd be going by Ella Lake, then Point Louise, and  
12 then you're in the Misty Fjords. Those same points would be  
13 passed on the way back.

14 Q. Yeah. So you were trained what the common reporting points  
15 along the routes that we flew were?

16 A. That's correct.

17 MR. ROOF: All right. That's all.

18 MR. BANNING: Clint, do you have any?

19 MR. ROOF: Go ahead.

20 MR. BANNING: Thank you, Kevin.

21 Clint, do you have any questions for Mr. Beck, for Lou?

22 MR. JOHNSON: No, sir. I'm fine. Thanks, Brice.

23 MR. BANNING: Okay. With that, our follow-up interview is  
24 concluded at 11:20, and the recording is --

25 (Off the record at 11:20 a.m.)

1 (On the record.)

2 MR. BANNING: Okay. We are back on with Mr. Lou Beck.

3 Go ahead, Lou.

4 MR. BECK: Okay. Clarification on one of your questions with  
5 regard to the operators agreement, whether I remembered an  
6 operators agreement. The operators agreement that I'm aware of is  
7 one that was presented to me and all of our pilots after the  
8 accident. I was not aware of one prior to the accident. I am  
9 aware of one after the accident.

10 MR. BANNING: Okay. I appreciate that clarification.

11 And we will go back off the record at 11:21.

12 (Whereupon, at 11:21 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

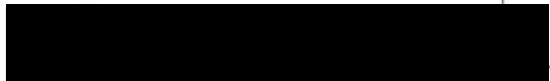
IN THE MATTER OF:           TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MID-AIR  
                                  COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN  
                                  KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019  
                                  Interview of Louis Beck

ACCIDENT NUMBER:           CEN19MA141

PLACE:                       Via Telephone

DATE:                        September 18, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathryn A. Mirfin  
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MIDAIR \*

COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN \* Accident No.: CEN19MA141

KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019 \*

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Interview of: CLARK HASSEL

May 2019

## APPEARANCES:

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Taquan Air

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(On behalf of Mr. Hassel)



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I N T E R V I E W

(8:58 a.m.)

MR. BANNING: And we are on the record at 8:58 in the morning, Alaska time. My name's Brice Banning. I'm a senior aircraft accident investigator with National Transportation Safety Board. The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. The NTSB is not part of the DOT or FAA and it has no regulatory or enforcement powers.

At this point we're here investigating accident number CEN19MA141. At this point I'd like to go around and have the parties or people present, participants, introduce themselves.

Bill?

DR. BRAMBLE: My name is Bill Bramble. I'm a human performance investigator with NTSB in Washington, .C.

MR. ROOF: Kevin Roof, Taquan Air, accident representative.

MR. GENTRY: I'm Todd Gentry from the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation in Washington, D.C.

MR. QUINN: Dan Quinn, attorney for Mr. Hassel.

MR. HASSEL: Clark Hassel with Taquan Air.

MR. BANNING: Do you have any objection to anybody being present, Clark?

MR. HASSEL: I don't.

MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you. Today we'll be using a

1 digital recorder to record the interview which will be sent out  
2 for transcription. The purpose of the investigation is safety to  
3 determine probable cause. Our role is not to assign fault, blame  
4 or liability. The interview is part of the fact-finding phase of  
5 the investigation. We cannot, however, offer any guarantee of  
6 confidentiality or immunity.

7 Each of the group members will have a chance to ask  
8 questions. We will ask questions one at a time and everyone has  
9 been instructed to not interrupt the person who is asking  
10 questions at the time. There will be the opportunity for each  
11 group member to ask follow-up questions after each person has had  
12 a turn.

13 Please answer all the questions to the best of your  
14 recollection. If you don't understand a question, just let us  
15 know. If you realize you misstated or want to correct something  
16 for the record, by all means, please do so.

17 You are entitled to have one representative of your choosing.  
18 Is there someone you would like to have as your representative?

19 MR. HASSEL: Mr. Quinn.

20 MR. BANNING: Thank you.

21 And Dan, you may direct Clark to not answer a question or to  
22 -- you can request a short break, conference, whatever you need to  
23 do, but we would ask that you not ask -- answer any questions on  
24 behalf of Clark.

25 And does anybody have any questions? Okay. All right.

INTERVIEW OF CLARK HASSEL

BY MR. BANNING:

Q. So Clark, if you would, please, if you wouldn't mind stating your name and your job title for the record.

A. Clark Hassel, chief pilot at Taquan Air.

Q. And could you tell us just a little bit about your background, Clark, your aviation background?

A. I started with air taxis in the mid to late '70s, and have been a mechanic -- A&P mechanic for 12 years, and started flying professionally. Held a pilot license since 1977 and started flying professionally in 1987 with the local air taxis, Cessnas, Beavers, Otters, Twin Otters, small Super Cubs and Pipers and whatnot.

In 2000, I took a job at SkyWest and flew regional jets for 8 years. In 2008, I took a corporate flying job and flew Global Express and G-5, G-550 for 5 years. Returned to Ketchikan in 2013 as director of ops for Promech, Beavers and turbine Otters, and started with Taquan in 2016 in same Beavers and turbine single Otters.

Q. And what is your current position at Taquan?

A. Chief pilot since October of '18.

Q. And prior to that you said you started with Taquan in 2016. What was your job function then?

A. Line pilot and check airman.

Q. Okay. And can you briefly describe some of your duties and

1 responsibilities as a chief pilot?

2 A. The primary responsibility is staffing and training of the  
3 staff to man the equipment and maintain the pilot records to  
4 reflect that.

5 Q. And do you have any training functions as chief pilot?

6 A. Flight instructor, ground instructor and check airman.

7 Q. Okay. Can you speak a little bit, describe the training  
8 program at -- pilot training program at Ketchikan or at Taquan  
9 here?

10 A. Well, let's see, generally initial new hires go through 40  
11 hours of basic indoc. Initial -- I'm sorry -- recurrent training  
12 is 8 hours of ground training. The initial new hires get 3 hours  
13 for proficiency in flight training. Recurrents get 1 hour in  
14 proficiency for flight training.

15 Q. And the -- when you have a Beaver pilot that is upgrading  
16 into an Otter, what's that upgrade training look like? Can you --

17 A. That's called transition training. I'd have to look at the  
18 sheet to confirm the ground training hours, and it's training to  
19 proficiency.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. It's flight training to proficiency.

22 Q. Okay. Is there any ground training associated with that  
23 transition training?

24 A. Yes. We'd have to look it up.

25 Q. Okay. Do you know what some of the topic areas that are

1 covered in that ground transition piece?

2 A. An extensive walk-around description of aircraft, extensive  
3 engine starting and limitations. Of course, we cover the exits,  
4 egress, all the safety equipment that's in the aircraft. The  
5 avionics were the same as the Beaver's so there's no change there.

6 Q. So in what portion of a pilot's training would he get the  
7 training for the Chelton units?

8 A. That comes with the initial -- I think there's a minimum  
9 of -- well, I don't know. I'd have to look that up. I was going  
10 to say 8 hours but it's usually more than that. Then for  
11 recurrent, it's 2 hours.

12 Q. Okay. And can you describe what all is covered in that  
13 Chelton? In particular to the Chelton training, can you go into a  
14 little more detail about some of the topic areas that are covered?

15 A. We use it to determine in-flight visibility and talk about  
16 the range, the distance markings, how to go direct to a fix. The  
17 track on the ground function is explained or covered, it's  
18 understood. We'd have to go through the curriculum.

19 Q. Yeah. No problem. Yeah, I appreciate you helping us. One  
20 of the things I'd like to ask is what -- can you describe what  
21 type of alerts are available with the Chelton unit?

22 A. There is visual and audible.

23 Q. Okay. Is the -- and the visual and both those alerts, are  
24 they terrain alerts, traffic alerts or both?

25 A. They're just terrain alerts. No traffic.

1 Q. Okay. So is there any traffic alert that is given through  
2 the Chelton?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. So what does the Chelton provide for traffic?

5 A. Visual cue of ADS-B traffic if they are transmitting.

6 Q. Okay. Was there -- I know you've got an extensive background  
7 and flying up here in Ketchikan, was there ever, to your  
8 recollection, a different alert that was provided on the Chelton  
9 units?

10 A. You have to clarify that.

11 Q. Was there -- did the Chelton unit ever provide an oral alert  
12 for traffic that you recall?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It's not the same as TCAS.

16 Q. Okay. And it did not ever, to your recollection, provide a  
17 oral "traffic, traffic, traffic" or something of that nature.

18 A. None at all.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. No.

21 Q. Back to the training just a little bit and the initial and  
22 the recurrent. I know -- does the initial training have any IOE  
23 training, route training?

24 A. Yeah. They -- we because we're commuter we do conduct a  
25 135.244.

1 Q. Okay. Does the -- in the recurrent training when you're  
2 getting ready for your season, is there any type of refresher or  
3 recurrent IOE training that you give?

4 A. Well, not 135.244 because they've already, you know, logged  
5 that or it's been completed. Then any other further route  
6 training is either flown or briefed either off the map or off  
7 Google Earth or with other pilots.

8 Q. And is that customary in your recurrent training when getting  
9 ready for a new season?

10 A. Always. Yeah. All of our destinations are line checks. So  
11 anytime they get a PC check, they're getting a line check at the  
12 same time.

13 Q. Okay. So routes are discussed every -- at the beginning of  
14 every season?

15 A. Yeah. Well, and the routes that we fly are 20 to 30 minutes  
16 long so we're not talking a great distance here.

17 Q. Okay. Does Taquan have any -- as a pilot flies the different  
18 tours and the tour routes, does Taquan have any mandatory  
19 reporting points along the routes that they train pilots to make  
20 radio calls?

21 A. The Tongass Aircraft Pilot Association, or TAPA, the document  
22 you have there, that has -- I believe it has reporting points on  
23 it.

24 Q. Okay. And the -- this document, Ketchikan Commercial  
25 Operators Letter of Agreement, Airspace Users, Ketchikan and Misty



1 Fjords area, is this -- is Taquan a party to this letter of  
2 agreement?

3 A. We are.

4 Q. And do you train -- this letter of agreement, do your  
5 training -- how do you ensure your -- how do you train your pilots  
6 about this letter of agreement?

7 A. It's introduced in the initial, and we'd have to look at the  
8 curriculum to see if it is actually included by name in the  
9 curriculum for recurrent.

10 Q. Okay. But you would train and expect your pilots to abide by  
11 what's in this letter of agreement?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. Has Taquan ever identified midair collisions as a  
14 concern, a risk area, that they've tried to set up mitigation  
15 strategies or something of that nature?

16 A. Not to my knowledge.

17 Q. Okay. And do you have any knowledge of a history of Taquan  
18 doing tours through the Ketchikan Lakes areas or concerned about  
19 high traffic through the Ketchikan Lakes area?

20 A. What is the question again?

21 Q. Is there any history of -- that you're aware of, of Taquan  
22 restricting tours through or flights through the Ketchikan Lakes  
23 area due to high traffic?

24 A. I don't think I've ever seen anything written like that.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. That's -- you know what? That's speculation. Actually, the  
2 best answer is I don't know.

3 MR. BANNING: Okay. Yeah. No problem. Absolutely no  
4 problem.

5 Bill, I think I'm going to turn it over to Bill and see if  
6 Bill has any questions.

7 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay.

8 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

9 Q. Could you describe, in general terms, your perceptions of the  
10 proficiency of Lou Beck as a pilot at Taquan?

11 A. Proficiency. He is proficient.

12 Q. Can you characterize his skill level compared to the other  
13 pilots?

14 A. More than adequate.

15 Q. Can you characterize his experience level compared to other  
16 -- the other pilots?

17 A. Well, he's at the 20,000 hour mark so he's -- and being an  
18 older gentleman, he is mature and has lots of flight experience,  
19 in my opinion.

20 Q. And can you characterize your perceptions of his attitudes  
21 towards safety and risk management?

22 A. It's high.

23 Q. Can you describe his level of conscientiousness compared to  
24 other pilots?

25 A. At a high.

1 Q. When was the last time before the accident that you  
2 interacted with him?

3 A. He did a recurrent and a transition into the Otter on a date  
4 that we can look up; I can't tell you what date that is right now  
5 -- which would be fairly current. We'd have to look it up.

6 Q. Did you have a chance to observe his performance in the  
7 cockpit?

8 A. Yeah. Yeah, I was the check pilot.

9 Q. Did you interact with him at all on the morning of the  
10 accident or on the day of the accident prior to the accident?

11 A. It's a blur. I can't say. I don't -- other than chatting on  
12 the dock here, that would be it.

13 Q. Okay. Do you provide recommendations to your pilots about  
14 how to use the display range while en route on a tour, on the  
15 Chelton unit?

16 A. Do I or did I?

17 Q. Do you -- did you prior to the accident and is there any  
18 policy about how they should -- or informal practice about what  
19 range they should use?

20 A. That's the pilot's own selection.

21 DR. BRAMBLE: That's all I have. Thanks.

22 MR. ROOF: I have one question.

23 BY MR. ROOF:

24 Q. Was the accident aircraft on a Misty Fjord tour?

1 A. He was coming back from Rudyerd Bay. It could have been a  
2 cruise fly. I'm not sure what --

3 Q. That's what it was.

4 A. If it was a tour or a cruise flight.

5 Q. It was a cruise flight.

6 DR. BRAMBLE: Is there a different -- I'm sorry. It's not my  
7 turn.

8 MR. ROOF: Well, the reason I asked that had to do with the  
9 LOA. And a cruise fly isn't really in a secure tour so much as  
10 it's a transfer from a direct flight from Ketchikan to a boat out  
11 there and back. And a lot of times it's in the most direct line  
12 possible.

13 DR. BRAMBLE: Kevin, do you want to ask him a question to  
14 elicit additional information?

15 MR. ROOF: I'm sorry. Yeah. No, I'm sorry. That' was my  
16 only question was what tour he was on, really, just to clarify.

17 MR. BANNING: Is that all, Kevin?

18 MR. ROOF: Yeah.

19 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you.

20 Todd, do you have any questions?

21 BY MR. GENTRY:

22 Q. Do you remember how many times you flew in his recurrent role  
23 this year before he was actually placed on the line this year?

24 A. I don't. I don't.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. That information would be on the schedule.

2 MR. GENTRY: Okay. Perfect. Thank you. That's all I have.  
3 Thank you.

4 MR. BANNING: I don't think I have any more questions, Clark.  
5 I'm going to go around the room one more time and -- Bill?

6 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

7 Q. Do you have any information you can provide to us about  
8 visibility limitations from the cockpits of either the Otter or  
9 the Beaver in terms of things that might make it difficult to spot  
10 conflicting traffic?

11 A. I don't understand the question.

12 Q. Are there any sort of unique characteristics of the Beaver or  
13 the Otter that might make it difficult to spot other traffic in  
14 the air?

15 A. In my opinion, I would say no more than any other airplane.  
16 There are side windows and forward windows and the same  
17 restrictions of the engine cowling. I wouldn't say there's  
18 anything prohibitive about those two airplanes that are different  
19 than any other airplane.

20 DR. BRAMBLE: That's all I have.

21 MR. BANNING: Kevin, any additional questions?

22 MR. ROOF: No sir.

23 MR. BANNING: Todd?

24 MR. GENTRY: No, I don't have any questions. Thank you.

25 MR. QUINN: I'm not going to ask any questions but can we

1 take just a short break?

2 MR. BANNING: Absolutely.

3 MR. QUINN: And let me just meet with him for --

4 MR. BANNING: Sure. Absolutely.

5 MR. QUINN: -- 5 seconds outside --

6 MR. BANNING: Yep.

7 MR. QUINN: I think we're probably done but --

8 MR. BANNING: Let me -- and I do have one more question. Do  
9 you want me to wait?

10 MR. QUINN: Oh, no, go ahead. Why don't you go ahead?

11 MR. BANNING: Okay.

12 BY MR. BANNING:

13 Q. I was just going to ask is there anything that you think is  
14 important that we haven't asked, that's important to our  
15 investigation, something we need to know that we haven't asked?

16 A. I would like to be asked if I had any recommendations.

17 Q. Do you have any recommendations about how to prevent these  
18 types of accidents?

19 A. People who have worked with TCAS, get on board with TCAS.  
20 ADS-B works just like TCAS. It's -- to me, I would put ADS-B in  
21 and out as a high level of importance in a congested air traffic  
22 area like we operate in here. There's only two ground ADS-B  
23 ground sites in southern Southeast Alaska and they're co-located  
24 where there are runways with very little runway traffic compared  
25 to the rest of the traffic in the region.

1       In my opinion, if you had mandated ADS-B in and out of all  
2 the commercial airplanes and had additional ADS-B ground sites,  
3 then they could be tracking these airplanes on the computer back  
4 here at dispatch. That's it.

5 Q.   Okay. So where the airplanes were at, where the event  
6 occurred, could they be seen on -- do you know if they could be  
7 seen here?

8 A.   I highly doubt it.

9 Q.   Okay.

10 A.   Just because of the nature of VHF and the direct line of  
11 sight.

12       MR. BANNING: Okay.

13       MR. QUINN: All right.

14       MR. BANNING: And I'm going to shut this off for now. We're  
15 going to go off the record for right now.

16       (Off the record.)

17       (On the record at 9:54 a.m.)

18       MR. BANNING: And we are back on the record with Clark Hassel  
19 at 9:54.

20       DR. BRAMBLE: This is Bill Bramble.

21       BY DR. BRAMBLE:

22 Q.   Clark, can you just describe for us your -- what you had  
23 witnessed during the search and rescue efforts for the accident?

24 A.   We -- me and another pilot and a ramp agent jumped into an  
25 airplane and proceeded out to the Carroll Inlet area, taxiing out.

1 I think it was Brian, the president, narrowed the area to go to  
2 Coon Cove, maybe based on lat-long or maybe a call from the Coast  
3 Guard. I have no idea how -- why he said go to Coon Cove. So we  
4 flew to, directly to Coon Cove and expected to see the airplane at  
5 the old log transfer facility, and basically flew right over the  
6 wreckage because I was expecting to see him just tied up. And  
7 could hear the ELT, which was probably the one under water. It  
8 was probably less than a half a mile that we could pick it up un-  
9 squelched.

10 Circled back or in the turn lost the audible sweep of the  
11 ELT, so I turned back towards where we could hear it again, and  
12 that's when I saw the floats sticking up out of the water and  
13 boats were starting to amass.

14 So I turned and landed into the wind, which meant turn back  
15 away from the site to land back towards the site. Taxied in, and  
16 as I taxied in the lodge boat was just loading the last of the  
17 ambulatory people and pulled away. And that left a -- what I  
18 describe as the most injured man and then the two other ladies  
19 were on the beach and out of the water. The man was still in the  
20 water. He couldn't be moved any more due to his injuries.

21 And then got up to the beach and the other pilot took command  
22 of the airplane to get it out of the area and I went to go talk to  
23 Lou and -- who came to greet me and kind of filled me in on what  
24 he had going at the time, which was the care of the most injured  
25 man and the two ladies. And then within about 10 minutes was the



1 Temsco helicopter with -- and actually the Coast Guard 45-footer  
2 got there before the helicopter did. And their personnel then got  
3 the most injured man on a backboard and we got him on a Zodiac-  
4 type inflatable and out to the 45-footer. And then the  
5 helicopters showed up for the other two ladies. So they all went  
6 on backwards, and Lou went with the last lady in the helicopter  
7 because you couldn't get them to go any sooner. And we cleaned up  
8 the mess on the beach and came back to town.

9 Q. And did Lou say anything about what happened?

10 A. Yeah, in the first couple of minutes he took me aside and  
11 said that it happened over at the Mahoney Lake area. He was at  
12 3500 feet or so. He knew, for a split second, that it was a  
13 Beaver on his left and he was adamant that he did not see any  
14 traffic on the Chelton. He said I looked specifically for that.  
15 It surprised me to see so quickly an airplane come from nowhere,  
16 that I had no ADS-B information on.

17 DR. BRAMBLE: Brice, do you have any additional questions?

18 BY MR. BANNING:

19 Q. Do you recall any of the -- do you recall seeing any life  
20 vests that would have been in the airplane?

21 A. There were two of the inflatable life vests. One was being  
22 used for a pillow for -- that had been inflated and the other one  
23 was -- had not been inflated and -- there were two, two yellow  
24 life jackets on the beach.

25 Q. On the beach?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. One inflated and one not inflated.

4 MR. BANNING: Kevin, do you have any follow-up questions?

5 MR. ROOF: No thanks.

6 MR. BANNING: How about you, Todd?

7 MR. GENTRY: No, thank you.

8 MR. BANNING: Okay. Anything you want to add? Okay.

9 MR. HASSEL: No.

10 MR. BANNING: With that we'll conclude.

11 And we are off the record at 10 a.m.

12 (Off the record at 10:00 a.m.)

13 (On the record at 10:10 a.m.)

14 MR. BANNING: And we are back on the record with Clark Hassel  
15 at about 10:10 a.m.

16 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

17 Q. Mr. Hassel, this is Bill Bramble. Can you just tell us what  
18 time you were notified about the accident and what time you  
19 departed Ketchikan and arrived on scene?

20 A. Based on the information on the schedule here it looks like  
21 I'm taxiing out at 12:35. I want to say it was 12:26, and I don't  
22 know why I remember that. I got the phone call to come downstairs  
23 to dispatch as the ELT had been reported, but I don't know by who.  
24 So I taxied out at 12:35 and was on site around 1 o'clock or so,  
25 at Coon Cove.

1 Q. Okay. So just to clarify, because when we first started  
2 talking you said based on the info on the schedule here, I'm  
3 taxiing out 12:25, and then you subsequently said you taxied out  
4 12:35.

5 A. No, I got notified about 12:25.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I was --

8 Q. Notified at 12:25.

9 A. -- yeah, taxiing out at 12:35.

10 Q. Um-hum. And you were notified by a call from dispatch?

11 A. That's correct.

12 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. Okay. Thanks. Off the record.

13 MR. BANNING: Okay. We are off the record at 10:12.

14 (Whereupon, at 10:12 a.m., the interview was concluded.)  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF:           TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MIDAIR  
COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN  
KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019  
Interview of Clark Hassel

ACCIDENT NO.:               CEN19MA141

PLACE:

DATE:                       May 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

  
Beverly A. Lano  
Transcriber

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of:

\*

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TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MIDAIR \*

COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN \* Accident No.: CEN19MA141

KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: RYAN MAEHS

Witness

My Place Hotel  
Ketchikan, Alaska

Thursday,  
May 16, 2019

APPEARANCES:

BRICE BANNING, Senior Aircraft Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

WILLIAM BRAMBLE, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:57 p.m.)

DR. BRAMBLE: We're recording. This will be a witness interview with Ryan Maehs, and it's currently May 16th at 3:57 p.m. We are at the My Place Hotel in Ketchikan, Alaska and we'll start it.

## INTERVIEW OF RYAN MAEHS

BY DR. BRAMBLE:

Q. Okay. Ryan, can you spell your full name for us?

A. Ryan, R-y-a-n, and the last name is Maehs, M-a-e-h-s.

Q. Okay. And what's your age?

A. I'm 32.

Q. Okay. And are you a pilot?

A. A helicopter pilot, yes.

Q. Okay. And who do you work for?

A. Ketchikan Helicopters.

Q. Okay. And can you describe for us the events of May 13 as they pertain -- did I forget something, Brice?

MR. BANNING: I just want to make sure we maybe get it on the record that he's all right with it being recording.

DR. BRAMBLE: Oh, yes. So as we -- do you agree to the recording of this interview?

MR. MAEHS: Yes. No problem.

DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. And we've offered you the opportunity to have somebody with you during the interview of your choosing and



1 you declined to have somebody with you. Is that accurate?

2 MR. MAEHS: Yes, sir.

3 DR. BRAMBLE: Okay. And present is myself, Bill Bramble with  
4 NTSB, and Brice Banning with the Alaska Regional Office and --  
5 okay, we'll resume.

6 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

7 Q. So you're employed by Ketchikan Helicopters and we understand  
8 that you were a witness to events related to the accident  
9 involving the Taquan airplane and the Mountain Air Service  
10 airplane on May 13th. Can you -- May 13th, 2019. Can you  
11 describe for us what you witnessed related to this accident?

12 A. Yeah, so I was on my tour and I'm headed out and I could hear  
13 some radio traffic and them, you know, reaching -- looking for  
14 2-Delta-Bravo. I guess he was overdue. I wasn't aware of this  
15 beforehand, and it was just kind of odd. It's not normal for  
16 people to be singling out an aircraft looking, so I kind of  
17 thought something might be going on. So I continued on with my  
18 tour and over by -- over Mahoney Lake and the Georgia Inlet area,  
19 coming down that waterfall, coming past that lower lake, I spotted  
20 what I at first thought was a boat. Once I got a little closer  
21 realized it was an airplane upside down, just the aircraft floats.  
22 They were floating.

23 So immediately I landed there, shut the helicopter off, ran  
24 first on the scene to check for survivors, see if anyone's on the  
25 shoreline, ran over there, yelled out for anyone. No one

1 answered. Jumped in the water, knocked on the aircraft to see if  
2 there was any response. Yelled. No response. Jumping back out  
3 of the water, ran to the helicopter, called it in on the local  
4 station there, 122.75, and then had those guys relay it over to  
5 the airport or to flight service. And then I returned back to the  
6 aircraft to see if there's any more survivors or any survivors, I  
7 guess. And grabbed a hold of the airplane, tried to pull it in so  
8 it didn't float out with the current; the tide was going out. So  
9 I was able -- started hitting in the bottom, and by that time I  
10 knew it would probably be safe there because the tide was going  
11 out, and I just waited there until first responders showed up.

12 I believe Temsco was first, with a Coast Guard boat about the  
13 same time. I -- at the time I didn't know about the other  
14 aircraft. I believe they went over to that other aircraft first  
15 and I tried waving them down and they eventually came over to our  
16 location. And one guy got out of the Temsco helicopter walked  
17 down and was asking me if anyone's here, any survivors. I just  
18 told him no one's here, and at this moment -- at that moment I  
19 didn't know if there were any survivors, but I told him I didn't  
20 believe so and that they were still in the aircraft. And, of  
21 course, it was upside down. So they went over to the other  
22 aircraft because there were survivors.

23 And from there just waited to get my wits about me, you know,  
24 from being overexcited and or just a general ongoing -- it's just  
25 not a good idea to jump right back in the aircraft and take off,

1 so I wanted to just take a few minutes to calm down, wait till  
2 people came back, Coast Guard came back, and then they basically  
3 took over from there.

4 And I went back up to my helicopter, and then -- I was on a  
5 tour so I stayed with those people for several minutes and then  
6 returned to Ketchikan.

7 Q. Okay. So your tour was departing Ketchikan and headed east  
8 towards George Inlet?

9 A. Yeah, our tours, we depart here at Ketchikan. We remain  
10 locally, for the most part. You know, we don't typically go past  
11 George Inlet. And I go over, show them the waterfall and I go up  
12 the George Inlet and White River back into Ketchikan through Ward  
13 Lake.

14 Q. Okay. Did you hear any radio traffic between the accident  
15 aircraft?

16 A. No. I believe that it had already happened by the time that  
17 I came on to that frequency.

18 Q. Did you see any seats or life vests floating around the  
19 aircraft?

20 A. Yes. As I kind of pulled in, there was one seat that was  
21 particularly floating. I guess on the -- the way the aircraft was  
22 positioned upside down and the engine was kind of inland pointing  
23 toward the shore of the little cove there, there was a seat  
24 floating on my -- the land side of that skid. I tried pulling it  
25 to see if, you know, anyone, unfortunately, was attached to it or

1 not. It was hung up, and so I just decided it's probably not best  
2 for me to remove or try to do anything and let the Coast Guard or  
3 appropriate authorities do this.

4 Q. Okay. Did you have any difficulty reaching the authorities  
5 by radio to notify them about it?

6 A. I didn't reach the authorities. Like I said, I was kind of  
7 in the heat of the moment. I didn't process to call flight  
8 service. I just called it up on -- I tried to call the airport,  
9 with no luck, between the mountain there. And then I called up to  
10 some airplanes that were in the air and had them relay it back.

11 Q. Did you know either of the accident pilots?

12 A. I did.

13 Q. Which one?

14 A. Randy.

15 Q. And how do you know him?

16 A. I went to college with his brother and we're around the same  
17 age, and I've known Tyler for years and years.

18 Q. Okay. When was the last time you saw him?

19 A. Randy?

20 Q. Uh-huh.

21 A. Oh, I think 2 weeks ago.

22 Q. Okay. How was everything going with Randy?

23 A. Randy, everything was good. Very excited for the season,  
24 like most of us. Just try to get the ball going, and no income,  
25 of course, and so he was very excited for the season. And he just

1 started his own -- basically branched off to his own operation so  
2 he seemed very excited about that.

3 Q. He ever express any concerns -- safety-related concerns about  
4 the area or about flying?

5 A. No, never.

6 Q. He ever talk to you about any the equipment in the -- in his  
7 airplane?

8 A. He's never -- you know, we kind of all -- everyone kind of  
9 runs routes with the same equipment. So no, I would tell you no  
10 he never talked about particular equipment in his aircraft.

11 DR. BRAMBLE: Brice, do you have anything you want to ask?

12 BY MR. BANNING:

13 Q. You mentioned on your typical tour flight that you go up and  
14 show people a waterfall. What waterfall?

15 A. That's the waterfall between Upper and Lower Mahoney Lake,  
16 Mahoney Falls.

17 Q. Mahoney Falls.

18 A. Yeah. The actual name might be Totem Falls, but everyone  
19 refers to it as Mahoney Falls.

20 Q. Okay. And you indicated that Randy had branched off. Was  
21 that recently that he had branched off, do you know?

22 A. Yeah, this was his first year being his -- I mean, he's  
23 always had Misty Air, that's always been, but -- he had already  
24 partnered with Michelle, who owns, I think it's Misty Air. I'm  
25 not 100 percent on that. But now he -- this was his first year to

1 be his own, and he had his own dock and stuff this year; whereas,  
2 before he shared Michelle's dock.

3 Q. Oh, okay. So had he just started Mountain Air or --

4 A. No, Mountain Air's been going for, I don't know, 20 years  
5 maybe. I really don't know on that. It's been Mountain Air as  
6 long as I've known it.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It's just basically he used to share a dock with Michelle and  
9 this year he got his own dock down here.

10 Q. I see.

11 A. So his own location.

12 MR. BANNING: Okay. His own location. I see. I think that  
13 was my only questions.

14 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

15 Q. Okay. Randy, do you have anything we haven't asked you that  
16 you'd like to tell us that may be relevant?

17 A. You know, I mentioned this to my employer and I -- you know,  
18 it's a small family one, kind of know everybody here. I mentioned  
19 to my employer and she took it to someone who works at Taquan, I  
20 think as their dispatcher, but -- and I just wanted to let her  
21 know that I noticed behavior from Taquan that was not ideal three  
22 times that day.

23 One being the first one of the day was an Otter over  
24 Ketchikan Lakes that was flying lower than I was in a helicopter,  
25 and that's not normal at all. I don't see how that's safe. And

1 even when I tried to contact him to say, hey, what's going on with  
2 you flying below me, and just to let him know that I was there and  
3 make sure he had eyes on me, and I didn't get a response on the  
4 radio at that time. So that was the first one of the day.

5 The second one was Taquan taking off with the tailwind in the  
6 wrong direction. Because they're basically our neighbor here and  
7 so we were -- it was southeast traffic that day and he took off to  
8 the west, and I'm going east and he's coming west, so I was like,  
9 what -- you know, it's not right.

10 And then the third was a Beaver trying to fly around that  
11 Mahoney Falls, which is -- typically that's kind of helicopter  
12 traffic, you know, flying around lower on the mountains like that,  
13 and they were flying their Beaver in there real tightly.

14 And so there were -- I let my employer know, and I think she  
15 passed it on to Taquan. It's just, you know, we've got to be  
16 safer out there.

17 Q. Anything else?

18 A. No, that's it that I can think of.

19 Q. Did you know the other pilot?

20 A. No. No, I've still never even heard his name. I didn't --  
21 because I had been gone 2 days, and so I haven't even looked back  
22 into it who he is or --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I don't think I know him.

25 Q. Do you know of any other witnesses to the accident that might

1 have actually seen it occur?

2 A. That saw the accident occur? I don't know any, to be honest  
3 with you. Like I said, whenever I started my tour I noticed that  
4 they were actually calling his tail number out and that wasn't  
5 normal. So, to me, I would think that something had already  
6 happened and I was the only aircraft back there whenever I saw the  
7 floats upside down. So I wouldn't know.

8 DR. BRAMBLE: Brice?

9 BY MR. BANNING:

10 Q. One more question. Do you know anybody who might have -- my  
11 understanding is that out in that area the appropriate frequency  
12 would be 22.75. Is that correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Do you know anybody else who was in the area about the time  
15 the accident happened that may have heard communications on 22.75?

16 A. You know, honestly, it could be any and all of the fixed wing  
17 guys, because they -- you know, coming back from the Mistys they  
18 typically try to take a straight shot I think and -- you know,  
19 honestly, I can't really answer that question --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- because it could be almost everybody or it could be  
22 nobody, just depending on who was coming through at that time.

23 Q. No problem.

24 A. But I didn't witness, like, another aircraft up there at that  
25 time.



1 MR. BANNING: Okay. Thank you.

2 DR. BRAMBLE: I have one more. This is Bill.

3 BY DR. BRAMBLE:

4 Q. What is your expectation about whether airplanes approaching  
5 Mahoney Lakes from the east will make a callout on 22.75 to alert  
6 traffic?

7 A. Are you asking me --

8 Q. Like is it a -- do airplanes typically announce their  
9 position when they're approaching Mahoney Lakes from George  
10 Inlet --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- to alert other traffic?

13 A. Yeah, typically, you know, I hear, you know, would hear  
14 daily, you know, one aircraft calling out "hey, I'm at 3.2 going  
15 over Mahoney." Yeah, it's pretty common to hear that every time I  
16 was up that way if they were coming over.

17 Q. How common was it for airplanes to transit that area without  
18 making a callout?

19 A. You know, it does happen. I don't know. I can't give you a  
20 real honest answer on how common, but it definitely happens, and I  
21 look up and see an aircraft there. And, you know, maybe they did  
22 a call on a -- because there was a frequency switch there. People  
23 switch and getting back on Ketchikan radio, and so maybe they  
24 called it and I was on this station switching over. So I can't  
25 legitimately say, no, they're not, but there's been times where I

1 didn't hear a call and have airplanes over the top.

2 DR. BRAMBLE: Uh-huh. Okay. All right. I think that  
3 concludes the interview.

4 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           TAQUAN AIR OTTER FLOAT PLANE MIDAIR  
COLLISION WITH BEAVER FLOAT PLANE IN  
KETCHIKAN, ALASKA ON MAY 13, 2019  
Interview of Ryan Maehs

ACCIDENT NUMBER:           CEN19MA141

PLACE:                       Ketchikan, Alaska

DATE:                        May 16, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Beverly A. Lano.

Beverly A. Lano  
Transcriber

Interviewee: Julie Sullivan, Wife of Randy Sullivan  
Representative: John Thorsness, Esq.  
Date / Time: July 24, 2019 / 1109 Alaska daylight time  
Location: Telephone Interview  
Present: William Bramble and Brice Banning, NTSB

During the interview, Mrs. Sullivan stated the following:

She resided in Ketchikan. She was married to pilot Randy Sullivan. They had been married 14 years and they were living together at the time of the accident. They had two children who lived at home with them, ages 12 and 15. She worked as a customer service agent with Alaska Airlines. She was not a pilot.

Asked about her role at Mountain Air Service, if any, Mrs. Sullivan said that she performed some tasks in the background, such as filling out billing paperwork at the end of the day. She had been doing this in the days leading up to the accident.

Mountain Air Service had always been an independent company, but they had recently relocated to a new dock. Trina Sullivan had been working for them during the 2019 flying season and she had also worked for them sometimes in the past, but not during the 2018 flying season.

Mountain Air Service had only been flying tours for about thirteen days at the time of the accident, but Mr. Sullivan had flown a couple of charter flights in April 2019.

She did not know the pilot's total flight time and she did not know the location of the pilot's logbook.

She stated that she and Mr. Sullivan had moved to Oklahoma where he started flight school in 1998. She was not sure how long he had been in school there. It was less than four years. Mr. Sullivan had completed some college but did not have a college degree.

Mr. Sullivan loved flying and having his own airplane. She could not recall anything he found frustrating or disliked about flying professionally in the Ketchikan area.

Asked to describe Mr. Sullivan's aviation work history, she stated that he had begun flying twin Otters in 2002 for Promech. The next summer he had flown for Seattle Seaplanes. After that, the family relocated from Oklahoma to Ketchikan and he began flying for Pacific Airways. After that, he flew for Promech, then Misty Fjords Air, and then he flew for Taquan until he started Mountain Air Service in 2012. He did not hold any other form of employment at the time of the accident.

Mrs. Sullivan stated the following about the pilot's activities in the 72 hours before the accident. On Friday, May 10 he operated three tours: an 0800 harbor tour, an 0900 Misty Fjords tour that was scheduled as a 1.5-hour tour, and an 1100 fly/cruise tour for Taquan.

Taquan had chartered him to take people out to the Fjords or bring them back, she was unsure which. She estimated that he went to bed at 2200 that night.

On Saturday, May 11, the pilot woke about 0700. He flew a 2-hour tour at 1000 and another at 1200. He attended his son's baseball game that afternoon. He returned home with his family between 1630 and 1700, spent the evening at home, and went to bed about 2200.

On Sunday, May 12, the pilot woke about 0630 and made her coffee before he went to work. He flew one tour that day from 1000-1200. It was a standard tour to Misty Fjords. She picked him and Trina Sullivan up from the Arctic Bar about 1800. She did not know how much he had had to drink at the bar. He was acting normally and did not seem intoxicated. She drove them to their mother's house to celebrate Mother's Day. They ate dinner there and returned to their residence about 2100. He went to bed about 2200.

On Monday, May 13, the pilot woke about 0630. She gave him a ride downtown at 0655 so he could retrieve his truck. He had parked his truck there after work on May 12 before going to the bar where he had a few drinks. At some point that morning she texted him to ask where they were going for dinner that evening, and he had responded that he did not know. She did not recall the time of that text. Asked if they had any other communications, she said they spoke by phone sometime that morning and he told her he had a flight at 1000. That was all she could recall. She was not sure what time that call had taken place.

Asked how soon after going to bed the pilot fell asleep, she said he usually fell asleep fairly soon after going to bed. Asked whether, on the morning of accident, he seemed well rested and alert, she said he seemed good.

Asked to describe his recent mood, she said he had been happy, excited. He was excited about the new dock location. He had his own dock. He was not sharing dock space with another aircraft.

He had no significant upcoming plans in his personal life. May through September was his busy flying season.

When he was off duty for an extended period of time and did not have to work, he would typically sleep from about 2400 to between 0700 and 0800. He did not have any sleep disorders.

There had been no significant changes in his sleeping habits, eating habits, or leisure activities in the last year. His recent schedule had been typical except he had been getting more charter flights. His most recent vacation was a family trip to visit relatives in March 2019.

Mrs. Sullivan was asked about any major changes in the pilot's financial situation, personal life, or health in the last 12 months, and she stated that the only significant change was that they were building the new dock and having a gangway installed. That was their

only new financial burden. Asked whether that was generating unusual stress for the pilot she said no.

She described the pilot's general health as good. He "could have lost a few pounds" but he exercised regularly. He had no medical conditions and was not experiencing any minor illnesses, such as a cold or flu, at the time of the accident. He did suffer from allergies in the spring and would sometimes take Claritin for that. He was not suffering from any unusual bouts of allergies on the day of the accident.

He had visited his aviation medical examiner that year, who also served as his personal physician. He had not had any other doctor visits. In the 72 hours before the accident, he had not taken any medication, prescription or nonprescription, that might have affected his performance. As previously stated, he had consumed alcohol the previous afternoon, but she did not know how much and he did not appear intoxicated when she picked him up at 1800.

He had not been involved in any prior incidents or accidents in aviation. He had not been involved in any recent incidents or accidents in his personal life outside of aviation. He had not discussed encountering any prior abnormal or emergency situations in aviation.

She did not think he was familiar with the pilot in the other airplane that was involved in the accident.

She did not know if he had a standard tour route for the Misty Fjords tour and she did not know where he landed during the accident tour. She did not know if his normal tour route when by Mahoney falls or through Ketchikan Lakes.

Asked whether the pilot ever expressed any safety concerns about flying in the Misty Fjords tour area, she said yes, he had. There were so many planes that flew back there between May and September and a lot of them were seasonal pilots that were not from Alaska and did not know the area as well as the pilots that were from there. The bigger companies were the ones that usually had the less experienced pilots. The pilot had not expressed any concerns about how the local flying community was cooperating on safety.

She did not recall when Mr. Sullivan began using the Free Flight ADS-B system with iPad display. He had had it a few years. She did not know how he had chosen that particular system. Asked whether he had discussed the pros and cons of that system, she said she thought it was cheaper than the Chelton system. Asked whether his airplane had previously been equipped with a Chelton display, she said she did not think so. He had purchased the plane at Kenmore, in Washington. She did not know if his ADS-B display system had an alerting feature for traffic conflicts. He had mentioned that the Free Flight system was a newer system.

Asked whether there was any additional information she could provide that she had not been specifically asked about that might help investigators understand the circumstances of the accident, she said no. Asked whether there was anyone else investigators should talk to,

she said the Taquan pilot. Asked if she had any suggestions for safety improvements, she said she was not a pilot but she hoped something good would come of this.

The interview concluded at 1200.

Interviewee: Trina Sullivan, Sister of Randy Sullivan, Director of Operations at Mountain Air  
Representative: John Thorsness, Esq.  
Date / Time: July 24, 2019 / 0900  
Location: Telephone Interview  
Present: William Bramble and Brice Banning, NTSB

During the interview, Ms. Sullivan stated the following:

She resided in Ketchikan, Alaska. She was the sister of Randy Sullivan. She was a dental hygienist who would sometimes take a leave of absence to work with her brother at Mountain Air Service in the summer. She was not a pilot. Her title at Mountain Air Service was director of operations. Her duties included taking reservations, making sales, obtaining permits, transporting passengers to the float plane dock, assisting the pilot with boarding and disembarking passengers, cleaning the passenger transport vehicles and supporting the pilot by bringing him coffee and food. Asked whether the pilot flew tours each day in the three days leading up to the accident, she said she would have to look at the schedule, which was not in her possession. She stated that she was performing her duties as director of operations in the three days leading up to the accident when he did fly and that no one else served in that role.

Asked what the pilot enjoyed about flying as a commercial pilot, she stated that he enjoyed the scenery and the camaraderie among the pilots in Ketchikan. Most had grown up in the area and the families knew one another. He also knew the area well, having grown up in logging camps, and he enjoyed telling stories. She stated that flying "settled him." She was not aware of anything he disliked about flying. Before starting Mountain Air Service, which she thought might have happened in 2013 or 2014, Mr. Sullivan had flown for Promech, Taquan and Pac Air. Prior to 2019 he had shared a dock with Michelle Masden, owner of Island Wings. This season was the first season he had his own dock. It was located next to the Ocean View restaurant.

She stated that Mr. Sullivan did not hold any other forms of employment at the time of the accident.

She stated that his total flight experience was greater than 11,000 hours. She thought he still kept a logbook which his wife might have.

Asked to describe the pilot's activities in the 72 hours before the accident, she said did not recall his activities on Friday, May 10 or Saturday, May 11. She recalled that he had operated some flights on Sunday, May 12 and she stated that after they were done they visited their mother's house for Mother's Day at 1800 where they ate dinner with his mother, his wife, and his two children. She thought they left their mother's house and went home early because the kids had school the next day and Mr. Sullivan had to work the next day. Mr. Sullivan dropped her off at her residence on his way home.



On Monday, May 13, she was in contact with Mr. Sullivan by phone and text messages starting around 0800. She had been at the Ketchikan Visitor Bureau at 0700 that morning trying to sell an 0800-1000 tour but she was unsuccessful. Because of this, the pilot did not have to arrive at the dock until 0900 to get the plane fueled and ready to go. There were some changes to the passengers booked on the 1000-1200 tour. Some had decided not to go and others had taken their place. She contacted the pilot to update him about changes to the bookings. She picked up the passengers for the 1000 tour at the Ketchikan Visitor's Bureau and transported them to the dock where the pilot was waiting at the airplane. Two of the passengers who were supposed to be on the 1000 tour were late returning from another tour and she explained to the pilot why they did not have a full airplane. After waiting about five minutes for the late passengers, the pilot decided to proceed with the tour. She asked the pilot if she should give the late passengers a refund, and the pilot told her to do what she needed to do, just make sure they understood he needed to pay his bills. She said she would take care of it and he said goodbye. She later texted the pilot to ask if he was going to operate a 1200 tour and did not receive a reply, nor did she receive any further communication from him. He had seemed ready to go when she arrived at the dock with the passengers. He was excited and loved what he did.

Ms. Sullivan thought the 1000 tour was running just a little behind. Ms. Sullivan was informed that the pilot reached the west side of George Inlet at 1221 on his return flight and she was asked if it was unusual for him to be returning from a 1000 tour that late. She said it was not surprising because he had left late and he would not shorten a tour, so she had expected him to be a little late returning. She stated that they did not have a 1200 tour scheduled, and the pilot was aware of that when he departed Ketchikan.

Ms. Sullivan said that the pilot's sleeping habits depended on his schedule. He did not have any sleep disorders. There had been no major changes in the Mr. Sullivan's sleeping habits, eating habits, or leisure activities in the last year. His work schedule depended on the presence of cruise ships in Ketchikan. Some days were long and other days they would not sell a tour. They did not have a 9 to 5 job. Asked whether his recent work schedule had been typical for the summer flying season, she said business had been a little slower because it was the beginning of the season and they had only been flying for 13 days. Asked to identify the pilot's last day off, she said she would have to check the schedule. She recalled that there had been a couple of days with no flights. Mr. Sullivan had taken a vacation in March when he and his family visited a relative in Oklahoma over the kids' spring break.

She did not think Mr. Sullivan had been involved in any previous accidents or incidents in aviation, or any recent accidents outside of aviation. She could not recall him discussing any abnormal or emergency situations in aviation, other than re-routing due to fog. She did not think he was familiar with the pilot of the other airplane that was involved in the accident.

Mountain Air Service advertised three tours: a Misty Fjords tour, a glacier tour, and a bear viewing tour. The Misty Fjords tour was the most popular. Occasionally, the pilot would do a 30-minute harbor flight if customers were short on time, or he might customize a tour

in some other way. He also performed charter flights for fishermen. The accident flight was part of a standard 2-hour Misty Fjords tour. The pilot had a standard route for that tour, but he would modify it as needed for weather. Points along the standard tour route included Mountain Point, Carroll Inlet, New Eddystone, the mouth of Rudyerd Bay, a dock in Rudyerd Bay, George Inlet, Ketchikan Lakes, Blue Lake on Deer Mountain, and then through a valley to Ketchikan Harbor. Ms. Sullivan stated that the pilot normally landed in Rudyerd Bay during the Misty Fjords tour. He would either land at a dock in the bay or, if the tide allowed, he would occasionally back the plane up to a beach so passengers could stand on the waterline. She did not know where he landed during the accident tour.

Ms. Sullivan was asked whether the Misty Fjords tour route normally went by Mahoney falls and she said she did not know. Asked whether the pilot expressed any safety concerns about the areas around Ketchikan Lakes and George Inlet, she said that he had expressed concern about the potential for “this exact scenario involving that exact company.” She stated that Mr. Sullivan and other local pilots had stated that they were scared that Taquan pilots did not know what they were doing. They were concerned that Taquan pilots did not know the area as well. She vaguely recalled hearing local pilots saying that Taquan did not always switch frequencies where they were supposed to or communicate properly with other pilots about their location or projected route. She had heard that Taquan hired pilots with very little experience, and they went out “in rows” and it would become extremely crowded. She thought it had been suggested that Taquan space their flights farther apart to leave more room so they were not all landing at the same time. She was not sure whether Mr. Sullivan had experienced any close calls, but she believed close calls had happened more often than they should. She had heard Michelle Masden of Island Wings express concerns about Taquan pilots “getting in her flight pattern.”

Ms. Sullivan was asked if she knew when Mr. Sullivan had begun using a Free Flight ADS-B system with iPad display. She said she had seen the system in the airplane before but they had not discussed it and she did not know anything about it. She did not know if the system had an alerting feature for traffic conflicts. She did not know if Mr. Sullivan’s airplane had previously been equipped with a Chelton display.

Ms. Sullivan was asked to clarify whether Mr. Sullivan would typically land at the dock in Rudyerd Bay or land in Rudyerd Bay and back up to the beach, and she stated that he had alternate landing areas, but she did not know where they were located.

Asked whether she had any additional information that she had not been specifically asked about that she thought might help investigators understand the circumstances of the accident, she said no. Asked whether she had any suggestions for safety improvements, she said she thought it should be mandatory to have monitoring of airplanes at all times, either through traffic displays or radio communications at certain points. She thought there should be more communication and less freelancing. She stated, “They think they’re a bunch of cowboys out there and they’re not.” She said she also thought they should have minimum experience for pilots to fly passengers back in the Misty Fjords area because it was very busy and less experienced pilots had no business being out there.

The interview concluded at 1005.



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**David B Banning**  
**Senior Aviation Accident Investigator**  
**Alaskan Region**

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**Date: December 19, 2019**  
**Person Contacted: Mr. Charles Brentwood Wiest**  
**Location: Telephone**  
**NTSB Accident Number: CEN19MA141AB**

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### Narrative:

On May 13, 2019, about 1221 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped de Havilland DHC-2 (Beaver) airplane, N952DB, and a float-equipped de Havilland DHC-3T (Otter) airplane, N959PA, collided in midair, approximately 10 miles northeast of Ketchikan, Alaska.

Mr. Wiest was the piloting a de Havilland DHC-3T (Otter) on May 13, 2019 near Ketchikan, Alaska. Mr. Wiest stated the following:

He said that he and Mr. Beck (pilot N959PA) both flew turbine powered, de Havilland Otters (DHC-3T). On the day of the accident, he had been flying and had communicated with Mr. Sullivan (pilot N952DB) via radio earlier in the day.

On his return to Ketchikan, around the time of the accident, he had elected to return via Mountain Point and Mr. Beck (N959PA) had elected to return via Ketchikan Lakes. He did not recall hearing a position report or observing an ADS-B target for either aircraft on his display; however, after hearing about the midair he knew the accident location and deduced that he must have either heard a position report or seen a ADS-B target on his display prior to the accident.

He did recall observing an ADS-B target for N959PA earlier in the day.

END



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**David B Banning**  
**Senior Aircraft Accident Investigator**  
**Alaskan Region**

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**Date: December 19, 2019**  
**Person Contacted: Mr. Harry Miller**  
**Location: Telephone**  
**NTSB Accident Number: CEN19MA141AB**

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### Narrative:

On May 13, 2019, about 1221 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped de Havilland DHC-2 (Beaver) airplane, N952DB, and a float-equipped de Havilland DHC-3 (Otter) airplane, N959PA, collided in midair, approximately 10 miles northeast of Ketchikan, Alaska.

Mr. Miller stated the following:

It was his second season flying in Ketchikan, Alaska. He had not met Mr. Sullivan (pilot N952DB) and was not familiar with the accident airplane N952DB. He stated that he might have seen it once at the floating dock.

On the day of the accident, he was departing Ketchikan when he heard the Ketchikan Flight Service Station (FSS) trying to raise N952DB on the radio. In an effort to assist the FSS, he offered to and relayed the radio communications to no avail. He remembered talking to Mr. Beck earlier in the day but did not recall seeing either airplane's ADS-B target on his display.

He added that he hoped that out of this accident ADS-B would be required for all airplanes that fly in the area.

END

**Record of Conversations – CEN19MA141AB**  
**Witness**

On the afternoon May 15, 2019 NTSB Chief Medical Officer Mary Pat McKay spoke by telephone with Josh Langley [REDACTED] a witness to the midair collision of two tour float planes.

Mr. Langley reported that Monday May 13 was his day off and he was bear hunting about 4 miles from Mahoney Lake. While he was waiting for bear, he was aware of planes passing overhead. At one point, he heard what he now believes were the planes colliding but was unable to see anything. He had no other comments but provided contact information for Donald Munhoven.

**Record of Conversations – CEN19MA141AB**  
**Witness**

On the afternoon May 15, 2019 NTSB Chief Medical Officer Mary Pat McKay spoke by telephone with Donald Munhoven [REDACTED] who is a Ketchikan pilot with Pacific Airways. He commented on an overheard radio conversation between two unknown pilots on Sunday, May 12, 2019.

According to Mr. Munhoven, he overheard two pilots on the radio who were clearly doing “Misty Tours” (flight tours of the area) discussing that they were unable to see one another on the local ADS-B Capstone System and that they would have to “go back to the old ways” and just “look out the window.” Mr. Munhoven believes that local pilots over-rely on the Capstone system and spend too much time looking at the display when they should always be looking out the window and stated, “I hear stuff like this all the time.”

**Record of Conversations – CEN19MA141AB**  
**Witness**

On the afternoon of May 15, 2019 NTSB Chief Medical Officer Mary Pat McKay spoke by telephone with Vance Robertus [REDACTED] who is Director of Operations for Pacific Airways, based in Ketchikan AK. He had spoken to John Langley and Donald Munhoven (who had already spoken with me) and called to “give his two cents.”

According to Mr. Robertus, pilots over-rely on the Capstone ADS-B system and spend too much time looking at the display when they should always be looking out the window. He believes the bigger problem is generally with the younger/newer pilots. He mentioned there had been a number of near miss events where one pilot would turn in front of another while in the pattern with the excuse the other plane had not been visible on the screen. He mentioned this had been the excuse even when the pilot was flying a plane not equipped with the system. Mr. Robertus mentioned that incidents or near misses were handled locally between operators.

However, he also believes the biggest local problem regarding over-reliance on the Capstone ADS-B system are some of the Taquan pilots. He feels the previous Chief Pilot at Taquan would say he would deal with a problem pilot after an incident but he wasn't sure it was ever really addressed and it wasn't effective at solving the issue. He does believe the overall problem is industry wide and probably nationwide rather than specific to Ketchikan.